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Translated Texts for Historians
Volume 32

The Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite

Translated with notes and introduction by
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PREFACE

Few texts in an oriental language can be of such interest to students of the Graeco-Roman world as the 'Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite', first published with a French translation by Martin in 1876, and then with an English translation by Wright in 1882. English-speaking students have been well served by this translation of Wright, but a century is a long time, and the student of today deserves a more modern translation and annotations elucidating the text from the scholarly literature of the twentieth century, rather than that of the nineteenth. German-speaking students have recently been provided with such a volume by A. Luther, whose book appeared while the present work was being completed. We have limited our commentary specifically to the late fifth and early sixth centuries, concentrating on certain pragmatic questions raised by the chronicle. We are much concerned with the literary and social ethos in which ps.-Joshua moved and acted, and with the sharp understanding he reveals of provincial economics, military operations, and the administrative apparatus of the Prefecture of Oriens. We see our work and that of Luther as complementary, but have taken an independent line in areas where the discussion overlaps, wherever possible giving a new reading to the sources.

The present translation and commentary is a joint project, and in theory the co-authors are both responsible for its contents. In practice, however, there were spheres of responsibility where each of us felt particularly at home. In general, John Watt was responsible for literary and philological matters, Frank Trombley for the historical. The translation of the Syriac text is the work of John Watt, as are the sections on literary analysis in the introduction and commentary. Frank Trombley dealt with ps.-Joshua's historical value and the Mesopotamian context in the introduction, and is responsible for the historical commentary in the footnotes to the translation. He also drafted the Maps, which were then finalised by the TTH's map-maker. Most of the footnotes were written by a single author, but some contain material from the hands of both.

In a work such as this, complete consistency in the rendering of names and special terms is virtually impossible, at least without producing many unfamiliar and barely recognisable forms. For names occurring in the chronicle, we have generally adopted the form closest to that used by the Syriac author. Thus, for example, we use 'Kawad' (which also best represents the Middle Persian) rather than 'Kavad', 'Cavades', etc. The major exception here is our use of 'Edessa', rather than the unfamiliar Syriac 'Orhai'. Other Greek names are usually given in their Latinised forms, although there are some exceptions, and most other Iranian personal and place names follow the system of transliteration used in the *Cambridge History of Iran*. In the notes cities and geographical features are frequently designated by their Syriac and Graeco-Latin names (e.g. Mabbug-Hierapolis), and in the translation loan words from Greek or Latin with a technical meaning are transliterated, sometimes with slight Anglicisation (e.g. *hyparch*).

We are greatly indebted to a number of colleagues for advice, suggestions, and constructive criticism. We should like especially to acknowledge the help of the readers, Sebastian Brock and Michael Whitby, and of the editor, Mary Whitby, who also guided us through the whole project with constant care and encouragement. Other scholars who kindly gave us advice on particular questions are Peter Brown, Peter Clark, Geoffrey Greatrex, Clive Havard, Antonio Iranca, Johannes Koder, Gareth Leyshon, John Nesbitt, and Richard Stephenson. We received much assistance in the preparation of the indexes from Alexandra Clark, and in the copy-editing of the book from Regine May. To all of them we wish to express our gratitude.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AS</i>	<i>Anatolian Studies</i>
<i>BAR</i>	<i>British Archaeological Reports</i>
<i>BCH</i>	<i>Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique</i>
<i>BMGS</i>	<i>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>CHI</i>	<i>Cambridge History of Iran</i>
<i>CIG</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
<i>Cod. Iust.</i>	<i>Corpus Iuris Civilis II: Codex Justinianus</i> , ed. P. Krueger (Berlin, 1954).
<i>Cod. Theod.</i>	<i>Theodosiani Libri XVI cum Constitutionibus Sirmondianis</i> , ed. Th. Mommsen, P. Krueger and P. M. Mayer, I-II (Berlin, 1905).
<i>CSCO, Script. Syri</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Scriptores Syri</i>
<i>DACL</i>	<i>Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie</i> , edd. F. Cabrol and H. Leclercq (Paris, 1903-50).
<i>DHGE</i>	<i>Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique</i>
<i>DM</i>	<i>Damaszener Mitteilungen</i>
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>EI</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i>
<i>FHG</i>	<i>Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum</i> , ed. C. Müller, I-V (Paris, 1841-70)
<i>GCS</i>	<i>Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte</i>
<i>HGM</i>	<i>Historici Graeci Minores</i>

<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>IGLS</i>	<i>Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie</i>
<i>IGRR</i>	<i>Inscriptiones graeca ad res romanas pertinentes</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JSAI</i>	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>Mus</i>	<i>Le Muséon</i>
<i>ODB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i>
<i>PECS</i>	<i>The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites</i>
<i>PLRE</i>	<i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i>
<i>PO</i>	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i>
<i>P.Oxy.</i>	<i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i>
<i>RAC</i>	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i> , ed. Th. Klauser et alii (Stuttgart, 1950-).
<i>RÉA</i>	<i>Revue des Études Arméniennes</i>
<i>ROC</i>	<i>Revue de l'Orient Chrétien</i>
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i>
<i>TM</i>	<i>Travaux et Mémoires</i>
<i>TTH</i>	<i>Translated Texts for Historians</i>

INTRODUCTION

The text known as the *Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite* or the *Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua*¹ is appropriately described by its title, *A Historical Narrative of the Period of Distress which occurred in Edessa, Amid, and all Mesopotamia*. It is as well at the outset, however, to make clear that 'the period of distress' covers the years 494-506 A.D., and divides into two 'distresses': a plague of locusts, famine, and epidemic which afflicted Edessa and the surrounding region from 494 to 502; and the war between the Persian king Kawad and the Byzantine emperor Anastasius fought out in the area of Northern Mesopotamia between 502 and 506. The text is well known to students of Syriac literature as the earliest extant work of Syriac historiography, but it is of special interest to historians of late antiquity both for its astonishingly detailed account of the life of an East Roman city in a period of strain, and as the fullest account of the Romano-Persian war of 502-506. While the name of the author is unknown, as is the exact date of composition, there can be little doubt that the writer was close to the events he describes, and the text is therefore a document of great historical importance for the period with which it deals. We shall in due course indicate some of the ways in which it sheds light on the history of the period, but it seems best to begin with a general description of the work, and then to discuss the various problems of origin and transmission, before turning to the issue of its historical value.

¹ The grounds for ascribing the work to a 'Pseudo-Joshua' are discussed below, pp. xxiv-xxvi.

CONTENT, STRUCTURE, AND LITERARY CHARACTER

The work falls quite naturally into five principal divisions:

- (1) Prooemium addressed to an abbot named Sergius (§§ 1-6)
- (2) An account of political relationships and events in the two empires leading up to the outbreak of war in 502 A.D. (§§ 7-24)
- (3) A chronicle of events in Edessa during 494-502 A.D., years of pestilence, famine and plague (§§ 25-46a)
- (4) A history of the war from 502 to 506 A.D. (§§ 46b-100)
- (5) Epilogue addressed to Sergius (§101)

It will be appropriate to consider in turn each division.

Prooemium (§§ 1-6)

In the prooemium, the author declares that, in response to a request from the abbot Sergius for an account of the famine and the war, he will write such an account, despite his inadequacy for the task. He had in fact already considered doing this, but had put it aside on the grounds of his feebleness and ignorance. Now, however, prompted by Sergius, who is motivated by concern for the present and future members of his monastery, he cannot refuse to do so, although he is by no means so well fitted to the task as Sergius has claimed. Sergius himself could have performed it much better, but in his love for the author, he has requested him to fulfil it, a love surpassing even that of Jonathan for David and comparable to that of David for the undeserving Saul. Sergius has asked him to write it in words of grief and sorrow, so as to lead those who read it to repent of their sins, but he can only write a plain and truthful account. This plain account, however, will in itself be sufficient to lead men to repentance.

It is possible that the core of this prooemium should be taken at face value. Ps.-Joshua may indeed have received a request from an abbot named Sergius, and the fact that he indicates that he has had only a single audience with him (§ 1) might be held to support this view.² Nevertheless, the literary device of introducing a treatise as the response to a request is so common that it is also possible that the request and requester should be regarded as pure literary constructs. In particular, 'the request' and 'the unworthiness of the writer' are linked *topoi* which reinforce each other: modesty would have forbidden the writer to pen his account unless he had received a request or command from a very important person.³ This makes it difficult to distinguish a 'real' from a 'literary' request.⁴ In ps.-Joshua's prooemium, the real or fictitious request of Sergius also enables him to touch on a few other literary *topoi*: the greatness and difficulty of his subject;⁵ the justification of a plain as against a rhetorical style;⁶ and a number of *synkriseis* (comparisons) employing biblical figures,⁷ as well as an allusion to the Edessene legend of Jesus' promise to Abgar concerning the inviolability of the city. It also enables him, since Sergius apparently wishes to know the cause of the war (§ 6), to 'justify' the following account of the cause.

² Cf. also the remarks to Sergius in §§ 18, 24-25, 39-40, 45, 79, 86, 94, 96, 101.

³ Cf. E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (New York, 1953), 83-85; E. Riad, *Studies in the Syriac Preface* (Uppsala, 1988), 191-202.

⁴ Cf. G. Simon, 'Untersuchungen zur Topik der Widmungsbriefe mittelalterlicher Geschichtsschreiber ...', *Archiv für Diplomatik* 4 (1958), 59-60, who maintains (n. 27) that general conclusions concerning the historicity of the request are unjustified (against Curtius) and each case must be individually decided. Cf. also Riad, *Preface*, 191. In the present case, the difficulty lies in the fact that there are no other data to enable us to establish the reality or otherwise of Sergius, let alone his request. The name was a common one. There is a Sergius mentioned among the abbots to whom Jacob of Serug's *Letter* 21 is addressed (ed. Olinde, 135), who could conceivably be the addressee of ps.-Joshua, but this is a mere speculative possibility. Other persons bearing this name about whom one might similarly speculate include the Sergius of Pesilta mentioned in Pseudo-Zachariah, *H.E.* 8.5, and an archimandrite of the monastery of St. Alexander (cf. *SEG* 40 [1990], no. 1380 *ter*). Cf. also A. Luther, *Die syrische Chronik des Josua Stylites* (Berlin, 1997), 20, n. 92.

⁵ Cf. Riad, *Preface*, 202-206.

⁶ Cf. Lucian, *How to write History* 40-44; Thucydides 1.21.1. Cf. R. Dostalova, 'Frühbyzantinische Profanhistoriker', *Quellen zur Geschichte des frühen Byzanz* (Berlin, 1990), 174-175; Simon, 'Untersuchungen II', 74-78; Riad, *Preface*, 93.

⁷ Cf. Curtius, *Literature*, 84; Riad, *Preface*, 188-189.

Pre-history of the War (§§ 7-24)

In the prooemium, the author has repeatedly stressed that the sufferings of the period were chastisements from God designed to bring people to repent of their sins. Thus the Persians were God's 'rod of anger' (Isaiah 10 : 5), although their free-will is not to be denied (§ 5). We therefore hear that 'even though this war was stirred up (by God) against us on account of our sins, nevertheless the cause arose on account of political circumstances' (ܠܠܗܘܐ ܕܠܗܘܐ) (§ 6). Ps.-Joshua thus accepts both divine and human causation, and now proceeds to a quite lengthy account of the human cause of the war, the political factors which, originating in the Roman occupation of Nisibis in 297 A.D., gained strength over the years and eventually led to the outbreak of hostilities. Our author, despite his Christian perspective, is therefore also a political historian, and in this section seeks to show, in the form of a continuous narrative, how the acts of statesmen and the inter-relationship of events were the cause of the war. On the Roman side we hear of the rivalries at the court of Zeno, the revolt of Illus and Leontius, and the jealousy of the Isaurians against Anastasius; on the Persian side of the death of Peroz, the fall of Balash, the accession of Kawad, the revolt of the nobles, and the restoration of Kawad with the help of the Huns.

The classical models of political historiography included Herodotus and Thucydides. Herodotus' proem (1.1-6) demonstrates 'for what cause' Greeks and Persians made war against each other, first by reference to the Persian explanation attributing it to the Trojan War, and then by reference to Croesus' (and Cyrus') subjugation of the Asian Greeks. Chapters 1-23 of Book 1 of Thucydides have been regarded⁸ as a proem comparable to that of Herodotus, leading into an account of the 'cause' (αἰτία) and 'truest cause' (πρόφασις) of the Peloponnesian War (1.24-145). Ps.-Joshua's account of the cause of the war could well have been modelled on Herodotus or Thucydides. Although he wrote in Syriac, Greek culture had long been influential in bilingual Edessa.⁹ He endeavoured to establish the credibility of his

⁸ Not only by some modern scholars, but also - more importantly in this context - by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Cf. W. K. Pritchett, *Dionysius of Halicarnassus: On Thucydides* (Berkeley, 1975), 13 and 71.

⁹ More details in J. W. Watt, 'Greek historiography and the "Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite"', *After Bardaisan* (Louvain, 1999), 317-328.

history by declaring that 'I found some of (the information) in old books, some of it I learnt about from meeting men who had been on embassies with the two sovereigns, and other things (I discovered) from those who had been present at the events' (§ 25) - in the reference to eye witnesses, a thoroughly Thucydidean touch.¹⁰

Chronicle of Edessa (§§ 25-46a)

When we move to the next section, we have a sudden change in subject matter, form, and method. What could be called 'The History of the Persian War', for which in §§ 7-24 we have had the prologue, only resumes at §46b. Instead, we are now carried back eight years to 494 A.D., and the stage is no longer the politics of the two empires, but life in the city and countryside (*chora*) of Edessa. No longer do we have a continuous narrative unfolding according to the historian's perception of the inter-relationship of events, but a chronological account on a year-by-year basis of a great number of occurrences in the city, many of which, however, are quite unconnected to each other. It is true that there is a unifying theme running through the whole section, which we could call 'apostasy and chastisement'. Nevertheless, the primary grouping of events is a chronological record of the notable occurrences of each year, not the organic development of one thing from another. The local chronicles of antiquity seem to have been of this character. Since they are not directly preserved, but are known only from their incorporation into later compilations, their precise content and form cannot be ascertained with certainty. It is, however, fairly clear that they consisted mostly of unconnected information on matters such as the deeds of dignitaries, their births, marriages and deaths, earthquakes, eclipses and other omens, dedication of public buildings, anniversaries, and occasions of special religious and ceremonial importance for the city, all recorded chronologically year-by-year.¹¹ Early critics evidently regarded the chronicle as a different

¹⁰ Cf. Thucydides 1.22. For post-Thucydidean historians, cf., e.g., Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.6.5-7.4; Lucian, *How to write History* 39-44; Procopius, *Wars* 1.1.3-5. See in general, Dostalova, 'Profanhistoriker', 174-179.

¹¹ Cf. B. Croke, 'City chronicles of late antiquity', *Reading the Past in Late Antiquity* (Sydney, 1990), 165-203.

genre from the history,¹² although in late antiquity and Byzantium the two influenced each other and to a certain extent became intertwined.¹³

The content and form of this section of ps.-Joshua broadly conform to the genre of the local chronicle,¹⁴ and it is on the basis of this section that the word 'Chronicle' in the conventional title of our work may be justified. Christian chroniclers of Byzantium did not, however, simply record the events, but also 'explained' them - not through the inter-relationship of events in the manner of the classical historian, but as brought about directly by God.¹⁵ This is clearly the perspective in which ps.-Joshua views and explains the events of those years: the sufferings of the Edessenes were chastisements inflicted by God, designed to lead sinners to repentance.

The particular transgression of the citizens which offends him is the celebrations at the theatre and elsewhere in the city during the month of May (Iyar). According to our author, these were held on the 17th May in 496 A.D. (§ 27), and in 498 A.D. the celebrations started seven days before the festival day proper (§ 30). In 502 A.D. Anastasius abolished the mime shows, an event independently confirmed by Procopius of Gaza,¹⁶ and within thirty days of the discontinued festival the famine eased (§ 46a). This festival might have been a local springtime custom. It is more likely, however, that it was the Edessene form of the festival known at Antioch and elsewhere as the Maiuma and at Constantinople as the Brytae, for the Maiuma was held in May and had a reputation for licentiousness and theatrical shows, while the Brytae involved dancing

¹² The most important early passages are Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.8.3-4 and *On Thucydides* 5; Cicero, *On the Orator* 2.51-54 and *On Laws* 1.5-8; and Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 5.18. See in general F. Jacoby, *Atthis. The Local Chronicles of Ancient Athens* (Oxford, 1949), 86-87.

¹³ Cf. H.-G. Beck, 'Zur byzantinischen "Mönchschronik"', *Speculum Historiale* (Freiburg/Munich, 1965), 188-195; H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, I (Munich, 1978), 252-254; Averil Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (London, 1985), 24-32; I. Rochow, 'Chronographie', *Quellen zur Geschichte des frühen Byzanz*, 192-193; Dostalova, 'Profanhistoriker', 170-174.

¹⁴ Ps.-Joshua may have made use of the archives at Edessa, reference to the existence of which is made by Eusebius, *H.E.* 1.13.5 and the *Chronicle of Edessa*, *CSCO* 1, p. 3 / 2, p. 4. His remarks in § 25 that he found 'some of the information (sc. about the antecedents of the war) in old books' shows that he knew how to consult written sources. Cf. further below, xxx-xxxiv.

¹⁵ Cf. C. Mango, *Byzantium. The Empire of New Rome* (London, 1980), 189-191.

¹⁶ *Panegyric* 16 (ed./tr. Chauvot, p. 18/42).

and was abolished by Anastasius after its celebration in 501.¹⁷ The mime shows at the theatre were the object of attack by many writers on moral grounds, and by Christians also on account of their pagan associations. Jacob of Serug, a contemporary of ps.-Joshua and onetime student at Edessa, wrote a number of homilies *On the Spectacles of the Theatre*¹⁸ (but without linking them to a particular festival) whose very wording is at some points close to our author.¹⁹ By characterising this festival as a time 'at which the pagan myths were chanted' (§ 30) and an 'evil festival of the Greek myths' (§ 46a), ps.-Joshua associated it with paganism and pantomime, and thus made it the occasion for the divine chastisement which ended with the abolition of the mime. It is possible, however, that the chance coincidence of Anastasius' decree and the easing of the famine²⁰ was not the only reason for his interest in the pantomime. On the pagan side, Zosimus traced the decline of Rome back to the introduction of mime there in the time of Augustus,²¹ and criticised Theodosius for his fondness of luxury and pantomime.²² He also perceived the *neglect* of the (*pagan*) Secular Games in the time of Constantine as the beginning of the empire's misfortune.²³ Zosimus and ps.-Joshua both probably wrote their works in the early years of the sixth century.²⁴ Ps.-Joshua may not have been directly responding to Zosimus, but such ideas were probably 'in the air' at that time.²⁵

¹⁷ It is not quite certain that the Maiuma and the Brytae were 'the same' festival, but it is very probable. On the whole question, cf. G. B. Greatrex and J. W. Watt, 'One, two or three feasts? The Brytae, the Maiuma and the May Festival at Edessa', *Oriens Christianus* 83 (1999), *passim*.

¹⁸ C. Moss (ed./tr.), 'Jacob of Serugh's homilies on the spectacles of the theatre', *Mus* 48 (1935), 87-112.

¹⁹ Cf. Jacob's criticism of people 'crying out to praise (the dancer)' (*Spectacles*, 95/103) with ps.-Joshua's complaint that they were 'walking all round the city and praising the dancer' (§ 30).

²⁰ A. N. Palmer, 'Who wrote the Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite?', *Lingua Restituta Orientalis* (Wiesbaden, 1990), 278 suggests that the coincidence was not fortuitous, but was synchronised by the church authorities in Edessa.

²¹ Zosimus 1.6.1.

²² *Ibid.* 4.33.4

²³ *Ibid.* 2.7.1-2.

²⁴ On the date of Zosimus, cf. Alan Cameron, 'The date of Zosimus' New History', *Philologus* 113 (1969), 106-110. On the date of ps.-Joshua, cf. below, xxviii-xxix.

²⁵ It is perhaps not too fanciful to consider whether ps.-Joshua was not only critical of Constantine and Theodosius, as was Zosimus, but also saw them as in some respects

History of the War (§§ 46b-100)

The account of the war itself appears at first sight to continue in the chronicle form, inasmuch as it is punctuated by the five year-headings of 814-818 A.G. (502-506 A.D.).²⁶ Closer examination, however, shows the impression to be quite superficial. Despite the chronological frame, we are presented here with what is predominantly a continuous narrative history, not a compilation of discrete, annalistic records. The form of the account is governed by the author's perception of the flow of events, and is only very occasionally interrupted by 'annalistic' observations.²⁷ Warfare, of course, was the subject matter of classical historiography, and the subject matter of this section is the course of the war, not life in Edessa during the war. Kawad's failure to capture the city was, to be sure, a critical event in the war, and the author is greatly interested in it and experienced it directly (§§ 52, 59-63), but it is the war itself which is his real subject matter. The narrative begins with the omens of August 502 and the simultaneous advance of the Persians on Theodosiopolis, and ends with the triumphal entry and departure of Celer from Edessa after the conclusion of the peace treaty.

It would clearly be an exaggeration to designate this section and its prologue in §§ 7-24 'A History of the Persian War' if one were to insist that *all* the features of classical historiography required to be present in a 'history'. Our text is anonymous,²⁸ and it has no *lengthy* speeches, to take two salient points. Nevertheless, this is more like a 'history' than a 'chronicle', and some of its 'unclassical' features have analogies in other late antique histories, such as that of Procopius.²⁹ Our author, an Edessene,³⁰ attributes the failure of Kawad to take the city to the legendary promise of Jesus to Abgar (§§ 5, 58, 60), but even Procopius,

'anti-types' of Anastasius. Zosimus criticised Theodosius for enjoying the pantomime (above, n. 22), while Anastasius abolished it; Zosimus criticised Constantine for introducing the *chrysargyron* (2.38), Anastasius abolished it (cf. ps.-Joshua, § 31).

²⁶ §§ 49, 64, 76, 90, 97.

²⁷ Such observations of local events not directly related to the fighting or the presence of soldiers are found in §§ 83 (Amid), 87 (Edessa), 89 (Serug and Edessa), 91-92 (Birta, Europus, Edessa).

²⁸ Cf. below, xxiv-xxvi. The anonymity might be a natural consequence of the author's assumption of a local audience, who would know his identity, as Mary Whitby has suggested to us.

²⁹ Cf. Cameron, *Procopius*, 29-32.

³⁰ Cf. below, xxvi.

although more sceptical, to be sure, introduces this theme in the history of a later Persian assault against the city.³¹ Even such a ‘popular’ story as that of the miraculous egg (§§ 67-68) would not necessarily be out of place in a late antique history.³²

At the beginning of the section, however, there are two brief paragraphs (§§ 46b and 49; cf. also § 47) which have a more markedly Christian tone, and link this section more closely with the preceding ‘Chronicle of apostasy and chastisement’. These hint at a religious ‘explanation’ of the war and at eschatological speculation in the author’s environment. His religious ‘explanation’ of the suffering of 494-502 is quite clear - the May festival and the associated activities - but the same cannot be said of his religious ‘explanation’ of the distress of the war. He declines to be specific about the sins which he claims to have been responsible for it, ‘because even the rulers (ܡܠܚܝܡ) were involved in them ... However, in order not to leave the matter completely hidden ... I shall (simply) put down a word of a prophet from which you will understand (what I mean) ... “Alas for him who says to his father, ‘What are you begetting?’, or to his mother, ‘What are you bearing?’ ” (Is. 45 : 10) ... However, if our Lord allows us to see you in health, we will say (more) to you about these things as far as we are able’ (§ 46b). The matter may not have remained completely hidden from (the real or fictitious) Sergius, but unfortunately it remains rather obscure to us. Palmer has correctly observed that ‘here the Bible is being used as a means of coded communication’, but we are not convinced by his decoding of it in terms of christological sectarianism, for there is no hint anywhere else in the text that our author was at all troubled by such matters.³³ We consider it more likely that he was alluding to another facet of paganism, at least as he perceived it. The passage he cited from Isaiah is drawn from a section preaching

³¹ Procopius, *Wars* 2.12.7-34.

³² Ps.-Joshua’s treatment of this story can be compared with Lucian’s advice to historians as to how to deal with a *mythos*; cf. *How to write History* 60. On the difficulty of placing many authors on the ‘history-chronicle’ divide, cf. Hunger, *Literatur*, 253-254. The likely annalistic structure of Malchus’ history (cf. R. C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire*, I [Liverpool, 1981], 72-73), written in the reign of Anastasius, is especially noteworthy in this context.

³³ Palmer, ‘Joshua’, 279-280. Palmer’s translation of ܡܠܚܝܡ as ‘abbots’ (ibid., 277 and n. 3) is unconvincing for the same reason.

the whole world' that 'these things did not happen to us because it was the final age' (§ 49). This brief reference to the fact that 'many indeed thought along these lines' shows that such ideas were being considered in Edessa at the time, but evidently ps.-Joshua was not in sympathy with them. In the epilogue he turned, as he had done in the prooemium, to a literary motif of pre-Christian origin which had to some extent been Christianised, this time under the impact of Christian eschatology. The theme of the return of the Golden Age had long been associated with relief from misery and struggle and the benevolent rule of a wise emperor, although from the fourth century it had been integrated by some Christian authors into an eschatological schema.⁴⁰ Ps.-Joshua may have turned to this theme on account of this association, but if so, he set aside the eschatological fervour of some of his contemporaries and ended his work with the non-eschatological, albeit Christianised, form of the myth,⁴¹ expressing the hope that a great change would happen in the world surpassing his ability 'to tell of the good conduct of our citizens, of the peace and prosperity that shall reign in the world, of the great abundance that shall come to pass, and of the overflowing increase of the harvest of the blessing of God, who said, "The former troubles will be forgotten and be hidden from my sight".'

TRANSMISSION, AUTHORSHIP, AND DATE

The 'Chronicle of ps.-Joshua' is not preserved as an independent treatise in any Syriac manuscript, but only as a section of a larger work known as the 'Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius' or the 'Chronicle of Zuqnin'.⁴² This larger work is itself preserved in a single manuscript, which is unfortunately mutilated at both beginning and end. If its

⁴⁰ Cf. O. Nicholson, 'Golden Age and the end of the world', *The Medieval Mediterranean* (St. Cloud, Minnesota, 1988), 11-18.

⁴¹ A point not mentioned by Nicholson, *ibid.*

⁴² On this larger work, see especially W. Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre* (Uppsala, 1987); *idem*, *Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, Chronicle Part III* (Liverpool, 1996); A. Harrak, *The Chronicle of Zuqnin Parts III and IV* (Toronto, 1999). Only a brief description of the larger work need be offered here.

author was named in the title or subscription, that can no longer be ascertained. Nevertheless, since it ends in 775 A.D., which the author designates 'the year in which we are', it was evidently composed at this time. From another remark of the author, it appears that he was a monk of Zuqnin (near Amid). This larger chronicle incorporates several earlier sources, the 'Chronicle of ps.-Joshua' being situated between the second and third of its four principal sections. Since the third of these sections is largely based on the (otherwise lost) second part of the *Ecclesiastical History* of John of Ephesus, it has been supposed by some that 'ps.-Joshua' was first attached to the work of John of Ephesus, from where it was then taken over into 'ps.-Dionysius'. Others, however, have presented strong arguments for believing that 'ps.-Joshua' passed directly into 'ps.-Dionysius'.⁴³

The single manuscript of the Zuqnin Chronicle, *Vaticanus syriacus* 162 (and *British Library Add.* 14665, foll. 2-7), presently consists of 173 (plus 6) folios, the text of ps.-Joshua being on folios 65 recto to 86 verso (of the *Vaticanus*). With the exception of folio 66 (to be described below), all the leaves containing ps.-Joshua are a palimpsest, as is the greater part of the whole manuscript. The text of ps.-Joshua is nevertheless legible for the most part, although from time to time its reading is difficult and conjectures are necessary. The manuscript has usually been dated to the ninth century, but this appears to be rather too late if it was 'repaired' with a freshly written folio 66 around 902 (see below), and both Luther and Harrak consider it likely that this manuscript is in fact the autograph of the author-compiler of the Zuqnin Chronicle. Information on the scribe and date of the codex may have been given on the original final folio, but if so, that information is now lost.⁴⁴

The Syriac text of ps.-Joshua was first edited by Martin in 1876, although an abridged Latin translation was included by Joseph Assemani in his *Bibliotheca Orientalis* (vol. I, 262-283). Subsequently it was re-edited by Wright in 1882, utilising a fresh collation of the work by Guidi. A further edition was produced by Chabot in 1927, as part of his edition of the 'Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius'. Our

⁴³ Cf. Witakowski, *Syriac Chronicle*, 34-36.

⁴⁴ On the manuscript, cf. Chabot, *Chronicon II*, iv-viii; Witakowski, *Syriac Chronicle*, 30-31; idem, *Chronicle Part III*, xvii-xviii; Luther, *Die syrische Chronik des Josua Stylites* (Berlin, 1997), 11-14; Harrak, *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 1-4, 9-17.

translation is based on the text of Chabot (which differs hardly at all from that of Wright). The section numbers are those of Wright, by which references to this text are commonly made. A further edition was published at Mardin in 1959 by Dolabani, who was familiar with the editions of Martin, Wright, and Chabot. In addition to the French, English, and Latin translations of Martin, Wright, and Chabot, there are also versions in Russian (by Pigulevskaya), Danish (by Krarup), Turkish (by Dolabani?), and German (by Luther).

Despite its generally high quality, the manuscript contains a considerable number of common types of variation from the normal orthography, as well as some common types of error. It has also been frequently retouched by a later hand. The errors and irregularities are found throughout the whole codex, and have been assembled by Chabot.⁴⁵ The principal variations from the standard orthography are as follows: the omission or addition of final or medial *waw* or *yodh*; the omission or insertion of medial *alaph* or its mutation into *yodh*; and the omission of *tau* in *ettaphal* or when assimilated to *dalath* or *teth*, the omission of *dalath* when assimilated to *tau*, and the mutation of *dalath* into *tau*.⁴⁶ The principal errors are the omission of *yodh* before suffixes, the confusion of *waw* and *yodh* in suffixes or terminations, the transposition of adjacent letters, and the deformation of Greek names. These deviations or errors rarely complicate the translation and are not normally noted in our version.⁴⁷ Only where we assume a more radical correction to the text do we call attention to it by angle brackets. In these cases the corrected text appears in Chabot's apparatus or we elucidate in a footnote.

Folio 66 of the manuscript (covering the text translated below at §§ 4-6, notes 15-29) is in a later hand and was written by a certain Elisha of Zuqnin. It is very likely that this person is the same Elisha of Zuqnin as the scribe of the manuscript *British Library Or. 5021*, which was written in 902/3 A.D.⁴⁸ This later scribe has not reproduced the full

⁴⁵ Chabot, *Chronicon II*, viii-xi.

⁴⁶ On these common departures from the standard orthography, cf. Nöldeke, *Grammar*, §§ 4 (on vowels), 50 and 167 (on final *waw* and *yodh*), 38 (on *-hû > -û*), 33 and 35 (on *alaph*), 26 (on dentals).

⁴⁷ The more significant of these errors or deviations, such as the inversion of adjacent letters, are corrected in the text of Chabot and Wright and noted in their apparatus.

⁴⁸ Cf. Harrak, *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 9-10. The colophon on folio 16v of this manuscript reads: *ܠܡܢ ܠܚܬܝܡ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܝܗܝܠܝܐ ܕܙܥܢܝܢ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܝܗܝܠܝܐ ܕܙܥܢܝܢ* ('This codex was

text of the original folio which he has replaced, the text of which must have been longer than that which is now extant. The substituted text, however, does link up with the end of folio 65 and the start of folio 67 (in the case of the latter, with a small overlap).⁴⁹ At the end of this substituted folio, the scribe added a note which we now have to consider in some detail, since it is solely on account of this note that our text has been attributed to 'Joshua the Stylite'.

The author of our treatise is nowhere mentioned either in the title or the body of the text. The note on folio 66 verso⁵⁰ reads as follows (our italics):

Pray for the wretched Elisha from the monastery of Zuqnin, who wrote this leaf (ܠܡ ܠܡܠܟ ܐܠܝܫܐ), that he may find mercy like the thief on the right, Amen and Amen. May the mercy of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ be upon the priest Mar Joshua the Stylite from the convent of Zuqnin, who wrote this codex (ܐܠܝܫܐ ܠܡ ܠܡܠܟ) of this memorial (ܠܡ ܠܡܠܟܐ) of the bad times⁵¹ which have passed and of the calamities and troubles which that tyrant inflicted among men.

On the basis of this translation, it will be evident that we consider Joshua the Stylite to have been the scribe of the manuscript. The parallelism between the italicised phrases of the two sentences of this note constitutes in our view a decisive argument in favour of this interpretation. If in the first sentence ܠܡ ܠܡܠܟ ܐܠܝܫܐ means (as it undoubtedly does) 'who wrote (i.e., was the scribe of) this leaf', then in

written ... Elisha of Zuqnin wrote it'). Cf. S. Brock, 'Notulae Syriacae', *Mus* 108 (1995), 75-76.

⁴⁹ Cf. Chabot, *Chronicon II*, viii; Luther, *Chronik*, 14. There is no reason to suppose that the omitted passage concerned the May festival (thus Luther, *Chronik*, 15). The phrase in §27 translated by Luther 'an diesem Tag ... über den berichtet wurde' (i.e. in the missing passage from the prooemium) almost certainly means 'on this day which was specified (i.e. a few lines above, namely, 17 May, 807 A.G.), which was a Friday night'.

⁵⁰ Text in Chabot, 241, n. 6; Wright, ix; Harrak, *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 4; photographic reproduction in Luther, *Chronik*, 233.

⁵¹ Or, taking ܠܡܠܟܐ ܠܡ ܠܡܠܟ as a unit and the following ܠܡ as a recapitulation (thus Harrak, *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 5): 'who wrote this chronicle of the bad times'.

the second, [כתיב] כתיב כזה אזה can hardly mean anything other than ‘who wrote (i.e., was the scribe of) this codex [this chronicle]’. We consider Palmer to be quite correct in supposing that אזה must be rendered as ‘wrote out’, although mistaken in believing that the remainder of the sentence should be translated ‘this book (= ‘Pseudo-Dionysius’) containing this record/memorial (= ‘Pseudo-Joshua’)’.⁵² If Elisha had intended to designate his own work as scribal, but Joshua’s as authorial, it is most unlikely that he would have used the same verb (אזה) for both in such close parallelism; he would either have used the *aphel*, as Palmer suggests would have been necessary in any case, or he would have employed another verb.⁵³ While Elisha, however, was drawing a *parallel* between himself and Joshua as *scribes*, that does not exclude the possibility that Joshua was *also* the author of the larger chronicle. כתיב כתיב כתיב אזה will mean in this passage either this ‘codex of this memorial’ (as אזה means ‘codex’, for example, in the colophon of the Elisha of Zuqnin of MS. *British Library Or.* 5021, cited above, n. 48), or ‘this chronicle, that is, (of the bad times ...)’. The ‘bad times which have passed and the calamities and troubles which that tyrant inflicted among men’ may refer to Kawad and our treatise,⁵⁴ or to Musa b. Mus‘ab, the governor of Mosul, and the sufferings inflicted by him in the time of the author of the chronicle of Zuqnin.⁵⁵ Either way, we are required to assume that Elisha was using synecdoche (part for the whole), but this is not at all unlikely and much more probable than the supposition that he was here designating Joshua the author of our smaller treatise. In our view, therefore, Joshua was not the author of our treatise (as first proposed by Assemani),⁵⁶ but the scribe of the codex, and probably also the author

⁵² Cf. Palmer, ‘Joshua’, 273-274.

⁵³ Cf. the colophon of *British Library Add.* 17126: ‘There is in this codex (אזה) the commentary of five chapters of the Evangelist Luke. Here ends the Fourth Book (אזה) of the Commentary on the Evangelists Matthew and Luke composed (אזה) by Philoxenus, bishop of Mabbug. It was copied (אזה) in the city of Mabbug ...’. (Cited from J. W. Watt, *Philoxenus of Mabbug. Fragments of the Commentary on Matthew and Luke*, CSCO 392 [Louvain, 1978], 93, n. 4.)

⁵⁴ Thus Witakowski, *Chronicle Part III*, xxii-xxiii, arguing that the phrase can hardly apply to the universal chronicle of ps.-Dionysius.

⁵⁵ Thus Harrak, *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 7-8.

⁵⁶ This remains the view of Luther, *Chronik*, 12-16.

of the Chronicle of Zuqnin (as first proposed by Nau).⁵⁷ Both he and Elisha were from the monastery of Zuqnin.

The name of the author of our treatise is therefore unknown. From the internal evidence of the work itself, however, there is little doubt that he considered himself a citizen of Edessa, and lived in the city during at least some of the time for which he writes about it. Thus he calls Edessa 'our city' on six occasions (§§ 5, 32, 36, 46 (x2), 95), designates Peter of Edessa 'our bishop' (§§ 36, 39, 95), refers to Birta and Amid as 'near us' (§ 91) and 'with us in Mesopotamia' (§ 50), and Mesopotamia as 'where we live' (§ 49). The account of the famine and plague preceding the war is devoted almost entirely to Edessa, and on frequent occasions he intimates that he himself experienced in Edessa events about which he writes.⁵⁸ He expressly distinguishes 'things whose time has passed' (§ 6) from those 'which happened in our own time' (§ 9) and 'which happened to us ... and occurred in our time' (§25). The former are the origins of the war going back to the Roman capture of Nisibis in 297 A.D.; the latter occurred during the reigns of Peroz and Kawad in Persia and Zeno and Anastasius on the Roman side (§§ 9-24), and in particular (§ 25) during 494-506 A.D.

Some have sought to go further and endeavoured to establish his position and role at Edessa. It has been variously proposed that he was a teacher, a monk, a secular clergyman, and a steward.⁵⁹ The hypothesis that he was a teacher is based solely on a phrase in § 34,⁶⁰ and the phrase cannot bear the weight of the interpretation. At no point in the text does the author identify himself as a monk or clergyman, and we can see no adequate grounds for believing him to be either. The reason for supposing him to be a steward is his knowledge of and interest in food prices and similar economic affairs.⁶¹ Palmer even hazards the suggestion that he is to be identified with Stratonikos, the steward of the cathedral church of Edessa.⁶² His interest in these

⁵⁷ That Joshua was both the author of the Chronicle of Zuqnin and the scribe of the Vatican codex is the view of Harrak, *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 4-8, 12-17.

⁵⁸ Cf. §§ 3, 25, 34, 45, 47, 49, 60.

⁵⁹ Cf. the review in Palmer, 'Joshua', 275-277.

⁶⁰ 'Some brothers from our schools'.

⁶¹ Cf. F. Haase, 'Die Chronik des Josua Stylites', *Oriens Christianus* N.S. 9 (1920), 69.

⁶² Palmer, 'Joshua', 276-279.

economic affairs is certainly striking, but one could as easily argue that his interest in military matters shows him to have been a soldier, or his concern with judicial and administrative affairs a government official. All these hypotheses are mere speculation. The important fact is that he was a historiographer. This of course is not meant as a description of 'how he earned his living', but an indication that he performed his historical task 'professionally' by utilising the sources of information that were available to him. This makes it impossible to determine what was his 'real life job'. We should recall that he claims, at the end of his account of the antecedents of the war, to have 'found some of (the information) in old books, some of it ... from meeting men who had been on embassies with the two sovereigns, and other things from those who had been present at the events' (§ 25), and draw the obvious conclusion that he could have also utilised comparable sources of information, as well as his own personal observations, for the rest of the narrative.⁶³

It is possible, however, to delineate the author's general religious and political sympathies. He was, quite obviously, a Christian who was opposed to what he saw as pagan elements in the life of his city, especially the mime plays at the theatre during the spring festival.⁶⁴ He was also an obedient subject of the emperor Anastasius, whom he wishes to absolve from all blame for the war (§ 6).⁶⁵ Of the three celebrated churchmen of his day, he describes Flavian as 'the holy, pious, divinely-adorned, valiant and glorious Mar Flavian, patriarch of Antioch' (§ 83), Philoxenus (Xenaïas) of Mabbug as 'more than any others (being) supposed to take on himself the labour of teaching' (§30), and Jacob of Serug as 'respected' (§ 54). From about 506 A.D. Philoxenus campaigned vigorously against Flavian, and eventually succeeded in having him deposed in 512 A.D., but in the years before the outbreak of this bitter christological controversy, there was relative peace between the parties under the tolerant rule of Anastasius and the eirenic formula of the *Henoticon*.⁶⁶ Our author makes no mention of christological disputes or the parties to them, and from his favourable

⁶³ Even although the assertion is a literary *topos* (cf. above, xiv-xv), that shows he understood what was required of a historian, and makes identification of his 'real life job' problematic.

⁶⁴ Cf. above, xvi-xvii.

⁶⁵ On the (inauthentic) reference to Anastasius in § 101, see below.

⁶⁶ Cf. A. de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog* (Louvain, 1963), 49-64.

attitude to Anastasius and Flavian, we may assume that he too was content with the tolerant regime established through the acceptance of the *Henoticon*.⁶⁷

The last event mentioned in the treatise is the triumphant departure of the *magistros* Celer from Edessa in November 506 A.D. (§ 100). Apart from one sentence concerning the latter part of Anastasius' reign (§101), which must be regarded as an interpolation,⁶⁸ there is not a shred of evidence that the author was aware of anything which occurred after that date (November 506 A.D.). Anastasius, Justin, Peter of Edessa, Flavian of Antioch, and Philoxenus of Mabbug are all mentioned in a way which presupposes that at the time of writing they were respectively reigning emperor (§ 6), count (§ 81), bishop of Edessa (§ 95), patriarch of Antioch (§ 83), and bishop of Mabbug (§30). Anastasius died in 518 and was succeeded by Justin, Peter died in 510, Flavian was deposed in 512, and Philoxenus in 518. Furthermore, the epilogue makes little sense except on the assumption that it was composed almost immediately after the final events narrated in the treatise: 'I shall therefore take care, since I know your wish, and write down and send to Your Eminence whatever happens in the future and is worthy of memorial, if I remain alive. Let us pray - we who are here, Your Eminence there, and all men everywhere - that the content of the narrative will be about a great change which will have happened in the world. Just as we were unable to narrate the (events) of the evil times (past) as they (truly) were, because of the magnitude of their troubles, so also may we be unable to narrate those of the future, because of the magnitude of their blessings' (§ 101). There can be little doubt, therefore, that the work was written shortly after the end of the war in 506 A.D.

Against this conclusion stands the sentence following the triumphal departure of Celer: 'Even if this emperor seemed (to act) differently at the end of his life, let no one make difficulty over his praises, but let him remember what was done by Solomon in the closing period of his life' (§101). On the basis of this passage, Nau dated our treatise to 518 A.D. or later, the death of Anastasius. However, even were no

⁶⁷ Cf. H. Gelzer, 'Josua Stylites und die damaligen kirchlichen Parteien des Ostens', *BZ* 1 (1892), 40-46.

⁶⁸ Cf. below.

historical problems to emerge from this statement, it would still excite suspicion on rhetorical and literary grounds. The body of the work ends on a climactic note with the triumphal departure of Celer from Edessa: 'Rejoicing in the peace that had been made, happy at the coming release from the distress in which they were presently living, exulting in the hope of blessings expected in the future, and praising God, who in his grace and mercy had brought peace to both empires, the citizens sent him on his way with songs fitting for him and for (the emperor) who had sent him' (§ 100). The epilogue then follows, as the author turns finally to address Sergius: 'These few things out of many I have written for Your Grace to the best of my ability' (§ 101). Between these two stands the statement about 'this emperor'. It is scarcely credible that the statement could have been part of the original text,⁶⁹ or that such a carefully composed and effective climax could have been destroyed by the original author.⁷⁰ Furthermore, the sentence is addressed to 'anyone', while our author addresses himself to (the real or fictitious) Sergius ('Your Grace'). In looking back on Anastasius' life, it conflicts with the prooemium which implies that he is presently in government (§ 6). It can therefore hardly be doubted that it is an insertion (from someone other than the original author), probably alluding to Anastasius' change of ecclesiastical policy in favour of the anti-Chalcedonian party in 512 A.D.⁷¹ The comparison with Solomon (cf. 1 Kings 11 : 4) was presumably suggested to the interpolator by the juxtaposition of Solomon and Anastasius towards the end of the prooemium (§ 6).

⁶⁹ Correctly seen by Haase, 'Josua', 70: 'sie stört vollständig den Zusammenhang'.

⁷⁰ As suggested by Gelzer, 'Josua', 46-47.

⁷¹ Cf. Palmer, 'Joshua', 281-282.

HISTORICAL VALUE

(i) *Ps.-Joshua's Sources*

The chronicle of ps.-Joshua the Stylite occupies a unique position in early sixth-century historiography. To date, most discussions have concentrated on the identity of the author.⁷² It is generally agreed that ps.-Joshua enjoyed access to important sources of official information, but the process by which he acquired it, whether through written documents or personal interviews with participants, is unknown. The literary form of the chronicle conceals the fact-gathering process by the omission of all references to sources except the general observations made in § 25: 'I found some (of the information) in old books, some of it I learnt about from meeting men who had been on embassies with the two sovereigns, and other things (I discovered) from those who had been present at the events.' This remark applies mostly to the antecedents of the Persian War of 502-6. It has been suggested that ps.-Joshua made use of an official written account of the war.⁷³ There can be no doubt about the official *origin* of this material, but the traces of documentary data that can be identified by an analysis of the chronicle's literary structure do not immediately suggest a single-source theory, and such a view also seems to contradict the author's clear statement.

The 'old books' ps.-Joshua used are a different matter. He is here referring to the source material that went into §§ 7 to 24, which are a prehistory or 'archaeology' of the contemporary history that occupies the main part of the chronicle. The works in question are unknown. It is a vexing problem, inasmuch as ps.-Joshua seems in many instances to have relied on sources with a content superior to the one that survives in the other historical compendia, particularly for events in Osroene and Sasanid Persia.

Two later writers, John Malalas and Evagrius of Epiphaneia, mention their use of the historical epitome of Eustathius of Epiphaneia, which

⁷² For a digest of the earlier views, see Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War* (Leeds, 1998), 64f. and 73.

⁷³ 'If ... the mass of detailed data was integrated ... into a lucid military and diplomatic narrative before it reached Joshua, the source probably took the form of an official report on the whole campaign. Anastasius' regime had every incentive to sponsor such a work ...'. James Howard-Johnston, 'The two great powers in late antiquity: a comparison', Cameron, *States, Resources*, 166, n. 13.

went down to the fall of Amid in the twelfth regnal year of Anastasius (10-13 January 503).⁷⁴ It almost certainly lies behind much of what is found in Theophanes the Confessor's *Chronographia*, but the latter knew other detailed sources for the period after 503, and was often using an intermediate account that had Eustathius as one of its sources.⁷⁵ There is also some doubt about how and when Eustathius' history got into circulation. It was certainly available in Antioch in the 520s when the first recension of Malalas was nearing completion.⁷⁶ It is most peculiar that Eustathius did not bring his history down to the end of the Persian War of 502-6. In consequence of this, Malalas may have known that Eustathius died c. 504 before his history could be published, since Evagrius the church historian (who used Malalas) says he died in the twelfth regnal year of Anastasius (11 April 503 to 10 April 504).⁷⁷ In contrast, ps.-Joshua's chronicle was composed quite soon after its *terminus post quem* of 28 November 506, the last date it mentions (§ 100). It is far from certain that Eustathius' work was available in Osrhoene so early (or ever), and there are in fact no correspondences between the surviving fragments of his history and what appears in ps.-Joshua.⁷⁸ There are clear affinities in subject matter, but no precise overlaps, between ps.-Joshua, §§ 12-17 and the fragments of John of Antioch dealing with the insurgency of Illus c. 481-88.⁷⁹

For the present, no conclusive answer can be given to what 'old books' ps.-Joshua had at his disposal. The term could perhaps refer to archival materials rather than history books. Around this time, imperial edicts were generally read out publicly in the Syrian cities.⁸⁰ Ps.-Joshua may be aware of this in his report on the cancellation of the *chrysargyron*, the much-hated tax on urban tradesmen, in his

⁷⁴ P. Allen, *Evagrius Scholasticus the Church Historian* (Louvain, 1981), 7f.

⁷⁵ Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5954, 5961-3, 5977, 5984, 5996 (Mango-Scott, 174, 181-3, 202, 211, 224 [notes]).

⁷⁶ Allen, *Evagrius Scholasticus*, 8.

⁷⁷ Bury, *LRE* I xx, 431f.

⁷⁸ For the fragments of Eustathius, see *HGM* I 353-63; *FHG* IV 138-42. Cf. below, § 25, n. 111. Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War*, 61, 74f. P. Allen, 'An early epitomator of Josephus: Eustathius of Epiphaneia', *BZ* 81 (1988), 1-11.

⁷⁹ *FHG* IV 535-622; V 27-38. Cf. B. Baldwin, 'John of Antioch', *ODB*, 1062.

⁸⁰ Simeon bar Apollon and Bar Chatar, 'Lobrede auf den Herrn Simeon das Haupt der Eremiten', tr. H. Hilgenfeld in *Das Leben des heiligen Symeon Stylites*, ed. H. Lietzmann (Leipzig, 1908), 174.

observation that ‘the edict of the emperor Anastasius *arrived this year*, remitting the gold which tradesmen paid every four years ...’ (§ 31). The text of the law (whose prescript is omitted in the *Codex Iustinianus*) begins: ‘[Emperor Anastasius] completely remits the payment of the tax in gold and silver for everyone ...’ Ps.-Joshua has repeated the first clause of the prooemium of the decree in his narrative, whether from memory or after perusing the document, and has supplied the phrase about the four-year term of the tax out of context, omitting the other details of the law.⁸¹ Documents reporting on political events seem also to have been read out and publicly posted; thereafter, like newly published laws, they were removed to depositories in the *officia* or *bureaux* of urban, provincial, diocesan and praefectural governments. Lists of persons convicted of offences against the Christian religion were at times made known in inscriptions and perhaps other media as well.⁸² It was not difficult for high-ranking officials and interested citizens to get access to these papers, which included everything from imperial constitutions and police reports to public building records and miscellaneous notices about local events such as earthquakes, comets, fires, and even the appearance of peculiar personalities who frequented the public squares.⁸³

The information that ps.-Joshua gives on the fluctuation of the price of foodstuffs, public buildings and deaths from the famine in §§ 26-47 could easily have come from such archives. We suppose that documents of this kind existed from a report found in the final version of John Malalas’ *Chronographia*. After mentioning the decree which added ‘Theoupolis’ to the name of Antioch in Syria I, the author adds that an oracle warning of such an eventuality ‘was found in the papers of those who record the transactions of the city’ (ἐν τοῖς χαρτίοις εὐρέθη τῶν τὰ ἄκτα γραφόντων τῆς αὐτῆς πόλεως).⁸⁴ Ps.-Joshua’s chronicle is a more polished literary production than the sort of

⁸¹ Συγχωρεῖ πᾶσιν εἰς τέλειον τὴν συντέλειαν τὴν τοῦ χρυσαργύρου ... τὸν τέταρτον κατ’ ἐνιαυτὸν εἶτε ὑπὲρ τετραετίαν. *Cod. Iust.* 11.1 (Krueger II 423). But ps.-Joshua’s language was admittedly easy to come by.

⁸² F. R. Trombley, ‘Religious transition in sixth-century Syria’, *Byzantinische Forschungen* 20 (1994), 180-182 = *SEG* 44 (1994), no. 1761.

⁸³ I owe this suggestion to Peter Brown. It was the object of a brief position paper submitted to his seminar at University of California, Berkeley in May, 1979 (F. R. Trombley).

⁸⁴ John Malalas, *Chronographia*, ed. L. Dindorf (Bonn, 1831), 443C.

document-based local history that fills the sixth-century sections of Malalas' text. Like ps.-Joshua, Malalas includes reports about imperial edicts, tax remissions, the numbers of dead in earthquakes and the duration of comets; he also summarises petitions on behalf of the provincials, gives a detailed report about the amounts of money involved in a celebrated inheritance case, and much else.⁸⁵ There is one particularly apposite example. Christian captives held by al-Mundhir III, king of the pro-Sasanid Lakhmid Arabs, sent a petition to Ephrem, patriarch of Antioch (April/May 527-545), asking that monies be sent to ransom them. '[The petition] was read out in Antioch (ἡ δέησις ... ἀνεγνώθη) and everyone, each as he was able, gave to the so-called offertory boxes in each church' (εἰς τὰ λεγόμενα γαζοφυλάκια ἐν ἐκάστη ἐκκλησίᾳ).⁸⁶ Malalas' continuator possibly read an account of this in an archive containing various *acta* (ἄκτα = πεπραγμένα) of the patriarchate.⁸⁷ The Chronicle of Edessa contains many brief notices about the foundation of churches; these reports could have come from an episcopal archive in Edessa, or even have been read off inscriptions commemorating the construction and dedication of particular buildings.

The kind of official 'news sheet' described here also dealt with diplomatic missions to the Sasanid kings and military operations. Edessa was a point of concentration and supply centre for large Roman armies twice during the Persian War of 502-6, and Osrohoene lay in or near the zone of operations most of the time. It is easy to suppose that much paper was certainly expended and then deposited in urban, ducal, provincial and episcopal archives. The *protectores* working under the *magister militum per Orientem* also had extensive archives to manage; these seem to have been dispersed in many places, including at ducal headquarters like Edessa.⁸⁸ This might explain where, for example, the

⁸⁵ Ibid., 436C (earthquake at Pompeiopolis in Mysia), 439f., 442C-443B (earthquakes at Antioch and Laodicea), 454A, 460A.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 460B.

⁸⁷ Cf. Allen, *Evagrius Scholasticus*, 17. But it is also possible that he was present when the petition was read out and is here recording the most minute details.

⁸⁸ Cf. the various post returns found in the Nessana papyri: a levy of 30 camels and 34 dromedaries (6th c.); a list of military payments (6th c.); and an account of military camels and the personnel who used them (560-580 A.D.) *Excavations at Nessana III: Non-Literary Papyri*, ed. C. Kraemer (Princeton, 1958), nos. 35-37. Cf. Ammianus Marcellinus' story about the treason of Antoninus the *protector* in 359: 'He covertly pried into all parts of the empire, and being versed in the languages of both tongues [Latin and Greek], busied himself with calculations, making record of what troops were

figures for soldier's bread production come from, although the task itself was organised by the staff of the praetorian prefect. It is quite likely that periodic reports about military operations and embassies of the kind that turn up in Malalas' chronicle were released for public scrutiny. The difficulty with this is that ps.-Joshua leaves 'news sheet' out of the categories of evidence he consulted, unless it can be supposed that much-handled papyrus documents come under the category of 'old books'. As to the eyewitnesses he claims to have consulted, it cannot be excluded that ps.-Joshua spoke to various army officers and diplomats, and perused any documents that were available afterward.

Ps.-Joshua was capable of making an occasionally surprising omission. His positive view of Celer's overall direction of the war of 502-6 is undoubtedly reflected in his treatment of the latter's *adventus* at Edessa after the conclusion of the peace treaty in November 506. Yet ps.-Joshua omits the details of an important episode that reflects Celer's skills in operational leadership, the long approach march and raid he conducted in 504 against a number of fortified settlements in Sasanid Arbayistan. One finds this report, a historical *hapax*, in the chronicle of Marcellinus Comes, a political client of Celer who shows great enthusiasm for the achievements of his patron. Ps.-Joshua's omission can be explained by the failure of an oral informant to mention the raid in detail or, equally, by a missing piece of 'news sheet'.⁸⁹

(ii) *Relation to Other Sources*

It remains to put the chronicle of ps.-Joshua into the wider reference frame of sixth-century works that deal with the reign of Anastasius I (11 April 511-10 July 518), an emperor who had no historian. The chronicle of ps.-Joshua is the earliest surviving example of Syriac historiography. Classical scholars have a certain prejudice that Latin and Greek authors invariably wrote and researched their histories with a superior expertise compared to that of oriental writers. Text-oriented critics at times tend to see them as auxiliary sources of information

serving anywhere and of what strength, or at what times expeditions would be made, inquiring also by tireless questioning whether supplies of arms, provisions, and other things that would be useful in war were at hand in abundance.' *Res Gestae* 18.5.1-2 (tr. J. C. Rolfe). Although the process of inquiry was verbal, some of the information must have come to him in written form.

⁸⁹ Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicle*, tr. B. Croke (Sydney, 1995), 33f., 112.

along with inscriptions, coins and archaeological data. A point by point analysis of ps.-Joshua's text suggests a rather different conclusion. It can be summarised in four categories:

1) The chronicle is a unique source of otherwise unknown information for Sasanid and Lakhmid Arab affairs between c. 474-499.

2) It gives a detailed administrative history of Edessa, its *territorium*, and Oshroene between c. 494-506 from unique data that have no parallel, except for great urban conglomerates like Constantinople, Antioch, Rome and to some extent Alexandria.

3) It contains a generally complete list of price fluctuations during the locust plague and famine of 500-2, giving the most detailed account of such an event found in any ancient source.

4) It contains what is by any standard the most detailed account of the Persian War of 502-6 as regards the description of events and their interpretation; moreover, except for important reports about incidents that took place outside Oshroene, like the collapse of the defence of Amid on 10-13 January 503, ps.-Joshua's chronology of military operations has absolute priority over the less detailed, clumsily organised and excessively anecdotal accounts found in ps.-Zachariah of Mytilene's *Ecclesiastical History* and Procopius' *Wars*.

The task of demonstrating these propositions is a complex one, and is beyond the scope of an annotated translation; the basic materials for further work on this can be found in the notes attached to the translation.

In comparing ps.-Joshua to other historians, one must first invoke the name of Procopius. It is generally agreed that his account of the Persian War of 502-6 is of a poor standard:⁹⁰

It is its accuracy which is questionable. Take, for example, his account of Kavad's war ... Careful comparison of the three chapters which he devotes to it (*BP* I. 7-9) with the rich, document-based material in Joshua the Stylite and Theophanes (supplemented by the local information on the siege of Amid given by the chronicle of ps. Zachariah of Mytilene) reveals serious defects in Procopius' version. He allows extended anecdotes to elbow out much of the serious reporting which might be expected from him. Two connected errors of arrangement disrupt the chronology and make nonsense of the Roman strategy of the war. And the whole account is slanted so as to discredit all the generals involved, victory being attributed not to their skill but to an extraneous (perhaps invented) Hunnic invasion in the North. Procopius emerges from this first test as a slovenly historian, with a dangerous fascination for the sort of anecdotal material which attracted his Sasanian contemporaries. This casts doubt on the worth of all sections of his history which are not based on direct or indirect personal experience.

⁹⁰ Howard-Johnston, 'The great powers', 175f. and nn. 40-42.

Procopius' *Wars* deliberately denigrates the operations of Anastasius' generals in 503-6, probably in order to make the dismal operational and financial realities that lay behind the 'successes' of Justinianic warfare palatable to his audience, which was quite blasé about the official line of that regime as manifested in imperial edicts, 'news sheets', mosaics, honorific inscriptions and the other vehicles of its propaganda.⁹¹ To that extent, Procopius' handling of the Persian War of 502-6 is more a period piece than serious history.⁹² It is unlikely that this would have been lost on his audience, in view of the wide dissemination of official 'news sheets' in most provincial capitals. In contrast to such damning criticism, it should be noted that important details of the War of 502-6 turn up elsewhere in Procopius, as for example the sober report on the submission of the satrap of Martyropolis to Kawad in September 502 during the latter's approach march to Amid.⁹³

The ecclesiastical history known as that of Zachariah of Mytilene originally went down only to 491. The continuator who was responsible for the sections of Book VII on the War of 502-6 is usually designated 'ps.-Zachariah'.⁹⁴ It is the work of a Syriac writer who made additions to the church history and epitomised it, finishing his task c. 569.⁹⁵ It is an important work that drew on official sources and at least one local eyewitness for the Sasanid capture of Amid, as well as the subsequent siege of the Sasanid garrison by the praesental armies of Patricius and Hypatius, and later Celer. It is doubtful that ps.-Zachariah was first published in Greek, for Evagrius Scholasticus cites only the pre-491 passages (*viz.* from the 'real' Zachariah of Mytilene's church history) when writing his own ecclesiastical history in the 590's.⁹⁶ Book VII contains a precise and important account of the fall of Amid.⁹⁷ Ps.-Joshua knew the basic details of this story quite well, whether he got them through official 'news sheets' or oral sources. It was in such wide circulation during the war years that he saw no need to give more than

⁹¹ The negative side is seldom emphasised. Cf. T. Honoré, *Tribonian* (London, 1978), 5-30.

⁹² Greatrex has touched on some of these points (although with a different emphasis) in *Rome and Persia at War*, 73f.

⁹³ *Aedificia* 3.2.1-14. See below, § 50 and notes.

⁹⁴ Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War*, 65f.

⁹⁵ Allen, *Evagrius Scholasticus*, 8f.

⁹⁶ This is easily deduced from Allen, *Evagrius Scholasticus*, 142-151.

⁹⁷ Below, § 53, nn. 292-296.

the gist when he put his chronicle together after November 506 (§ 53), as he does with other well-known events like the abolition of the *chrysargyron*. Unlike ps.-Zachariah, who describes only the beginning and end of the siege, ps.-Joshua offers a continuous account. It brings in simultaneous events elsewhere, like the dispatch of the large detachment across Tur 'Abdin that culminated in the battle of Tell-Beshmai and the Lakhmid raid on the *territorium* of Harran, both in November 502.

The bulk of ps.-Zachariah's war narrative consists of the fall of Amid, a chronologically confused account of the run-up to, and battle of Opadna (August 503), and the Roman siege of the Persian garrison in Amid. Procopius emphasises the same events, but provides a different and somewhat inferior collection of anecdotes. The precise relationship between ps.-Zachariah and Procopius has not been studied. We suggest that Procopius drew upon some of the same material, but produced a blurred, Atticist version that lacks the clarity found in the two Syriac sources; moreover, Procopius' descriptions of combat are often little more than 'battle-pieces'.⁹⁸ Ps.-Joshua was also well-informed about the fortification of Dara-Anastasiopolis in 506, for which ps.-Zachariah is our principal source along with Procopius' retrospective report in the *Buildings*. As with the siege of Amid, ps.-Joshua gives the basic details with acute brevity, and then goes on to discuss ecclesiastical politics, the concentration and supplying of the armies in Osrhoene again in 506, their movement to the frontier, and the peace negotiations. Except for the treaty, the other sources give not even a hint of these events.

SIXTH-CENTURY MESOPOTAMIAN SOCIETY

(i) *Social Milieu*

Ps.-Joshua's chronicle is more than anything else a social document.⁹⁹ Its author's political biases are very much those of a well-

⁹⁸ See below, § 50, n. 261. On the 'battle-piece' as a predominantly rhetorical style of historical composition, see J. Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (London, 1976), 36-46.

⁹⁹ Earlier studies are found in J. B. Segal, *Edessa, 'The Blessed City'* (Oxford, 1970), and 'Mesopotamian communities from Julian to the rise of Islam', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 41 (1955), 109-139. S. Harvey, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis. John of Ephesus and the Lives of the Eastern Saints* (Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1990).

informed provincial. His ethics and social attitudes resemble those of middle-grade civil officials and soldiers who had risen through the ranks, politically-minded bishops, lower clergy and monks. His preoccupation with the realities of everyday life is closely attuned to the sorts of pragmatic questions addressed in the law codes and reflected in lesser documents like building inscriptions and papyri. This he combines with an admiration for emperor Anastasius, who emerges from the chronicle as the friend of the provincials and alleviator of the ills of famine and war. Ps.-Joshua also reveals enthusiasm for imperial generals like Areobindus and Celer, and the others who eradicated the scourge of war from Osrhoene. Among the latter are aggressive commanders like Timostratus *dux* of Osrhoene and Romanus *dux* of Palaestina, whose bad experiences with rioting Gothic soldiery are narrated with scarcely concealed amusement. Another figure is the Goth Ald, *tribounos* of a force billeted in Harran, whom ps.-Joshua seems to have interviewed personally about his experience as a ‘tunnel-rat’ during the Roman siege of Amid (§ 71). Ps.-Joshua shares the common prejudice of Syrian provincials against ‘Goths’, but can hardly resist praising Ald’s courage or emphasising the comic features of their behaviour.

Ps.-Joshua knew something of the social and political networks of the provincial administration and praetorian prefecture, but it is not easy to identify the precise milieu in which he moved. If we can accept his story that he got much of his information about the Persian War of 502-6 from high-ranking soldiers and diplomats, he must have moved in important circles. In all probability he was a high official in the *bureaux* of the civil governor or an ecclesiastic of some importance. A civil career was the more obvious place for a man who knew how to reason from historical examples, but one must recognise that monastic epistolographers like Nilus of Ancyra and Isidore of Pelusium knew this side of the Greek *paideia* as well. Either way ps.-Joshua was in a position to get his hands on the ‘news sheet’ that seems to lie behind much of the chronicle. We doubt that it can be proved that he is certainly to be identified as Stratonikos the church administrator (οἰκονόμος), later bishop of Harran (§ 42), but he does have more than a passing familiarity with the affairs of that town. It could have been his legal place of origin before the start of a political or ecclesiastical career. Except Amid and Edessa it is the most frequently mentioned

town in the chronicle (§ 42, 51-52, 59, 71), and one of the few places whose *territorium* is mentioned in any detail (§ 52).

(ii) *Paganism and Christianity*

As to religious life, ps.-Joshua's chronicle contains scattered details about the survival of pagan calendar customs in Edessa. He associates the performance of the Iyar festival (which should be identified with the Maiuma or Brytae) with the divine chastisement in the famine and war that followed. There are two peculiarities about this, the absence of the name of the divinity or any denunciation of sacrifice.¹⁰⁰ If the Iyar festival was originally that of a female fertility goddess, her Syrian name may have been Tar'atha, whose cognate at Edessa and Harran seems to have been Aphrodite.¹⁰¹ The supposition that it was a fertility festival is confirmed by ps.-Joshua's observation that 'on the day' it was being celebrated in 499 the locusts came up 'laying a substantial number of eggs in our country' (§ 33). The Edessans thus got an evil return for the ritual, the destruction of their agriculture for the next two years.

Ps.-Joshua makes no mention of the pagan community at Harran, whose beliefs and practices at this time are well attested.¹⁰² He may have expected his audience to draw an inference of divine punishment from the Lakhmids' raid against its *territorium* during the vintage in November 502, which netted them 18,500 captives (§ 52).

Ps.-Joshua elsewhere mentions Jacob of Serug's letter on the plague of locusts (§ 54). He may also have known about Jacob's 'Discourse on the Fall of the Idols', which names the Syrian divinities worshipped at Harran and Edessa.¹⁰³ It, with ps.-Joshua's report about the Iyar

¹⁰⁰ Imperial edicts had repeated the condemnation of pagan sacrifice in 451, c. 472 and, as it seems, c. 484. *Cod. Iust.* 1.11.7-10. Cf. Trombley, *HRC* I 78-94. The arguments cited by G. Fowden against a date of c. 484 for the last of these are beside the point. *JRS* 85 (1995), 343. Fowden is mistaken in supposing that *Cod. Iust.* 1.10.11 is the Justinianic edict of 529 against pagan cult practices. 'Polytheist religion and philosophy', *The Cambridge Ancient History* 13 (Cambridge, 1998), 558. The law in question is in fact *Cod. Iust.* 1.5.18. Honoré, *Tribonian*, 65.

¹⁰¹ J. B. Segal, 'Pagan Syriac monuments in the vilayet of Urfa', *AS* 3 (1953), 97f.

¹⁰² For sources, see D. Chwolson, *Die Sabier und der Ssabismus*, I (St. Petersburg, 1856), 301-471, etc. Cf. T. M. Green, *The City of the Moon God: Traditions of Harran* (Leiden, 1992).

¹⁰³ P. Martin (ed./tr.), 'Discours de Jacques de Saroug sur la chute des idoles', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 29 (1876), 107-147.

festival, suggests that local memories about pre-Christian liturgies and aetiologies, but also Christian temple conversions, were far from dead. For example, Jacob puts in the peculiar detail of a pagan contemplating how to piece together a smashed idol, probably with a view to reconsecrating it and restoring its indwelling *numen*.¹⁰⁴ Jacob mentions a group of shrines atop hills ringing a valley which resemble a group of sites at Sumatar Harabesi on the Tektek plateau some 200 km. east of Edessa.¹⁰⁵ It is unknown when the temples there went out of use, but, if there is a connection between the site and Jacob's sermon, this may have happened in the later fifth century.¹⁰⁶ The dialectical opposites he uses to celebrate the victory of Christ are vividly reminiscent of the now famous inscription that records a temple conversion on the *martyrion* of St. George at Zorava in the Provincia Arabia. It was erected in 515/6.¹⁰⁷ Jacob writes:¹⁰⁸

From this time onward, monasteries were built on the site of Baith-Gade, on the summit[s] of mountains. Monasteries were built on the hills in place of the temples of the gods. Solitaries made their dwellings on the summits. Wherever pagan gods (*les démons*) had asylum, [Christian] altars were raised. Where daemonic shouts were once heard, now the sweet recitations of holy men resound. In places where the devil proclaimed his lies, Christ [now] organises his worship. In places where women loaded tables with [the] food [of sacrifices], Christ gives his body. His light shines in all the corners that darkness had invaded. He changes night to day throughout the cosmos. The evil in creation He changes to good, as he once changed water into wine at the festival [of Cana]. He stops the defiled festivals of idol-worship and rouses the crowds who give holy glory [to God].

If one reads the sermon to the end, however, it turns out that the real idol is lucre, and that the descriptions of cult are only an extended simile. Nowhere does Jacob state that the sacrifices have continued until his time. It is far from clear what cultic apparatus, if any, lay behind the celebration of the Iyar festival at Edessa in May 499.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 136.

¹⁰⁵ Segal, 'Pagan Syriac monuments', *passim*.

¹⁰⁶ There is good epigraphic evidence for the continuity of pagan cult down to the 6th c. in other parts of Syria.

¹⁰⁷ W. K. Prentice (ed.), *Publications of an American Archaeological Expedition to Syria in 1899 III: Greek and Latin Inscriptions* (New York, 1908), 437a. Trombley, *HRC* II 363f.

¹⁰⁸ Martin, 'Discours de Jacques', 138.

As to Syriac Christianity, ps.-Joshua's reports are consistent with known beliefs and practices. He nowhere takes an explicit monophysite line. It is doubtful that such an agenda lies behind the positive view he takes of emperor Anastasius' administrative acts. It is equally possible that the Edessans had not hardened in favour of particular christological position when ps.-Joshua was writing in the months after November 506.¹⁰⁹ Apart from Sergius, the addressee of the prooemium, no monks are mentioned in the chronicle; it deals instead with the acts of the bishops and urban clergy during the locust plague, famine and Persian War of 502-6. There is important and nearly contemporary information in canon law documents governing the behaviour of ascetics and priests. Three of them are attributed to Rabbula archbishop of Edessa (412-36), another to Philoxenus archbishop of Mabbug-Hierapolis in Euphratesia (485-518/9). A number of anonymous compilations also exist.¹¹⁰

(iii) *Urban and Rural Landscape*

Very little survives in literary sources about the smaller towns and urban *territoria* except the information found in ps.-Joshua's chronicle. He speaks in varying detail about the immediate environs of Edessa (§ 59, 60, 62, 85-86), and to a lesser extent the *territoria* of Harran (§ 52), Amid (§ 66) and Zeugma in Euphratesia (§ 68). Inscriptions in Osrhoene are relatively few compared with other parts of Syria. This was partly a consequence of the economics of transhumance in the 'Arab'.¹¹¹ There is circumstantial evidence in the Greek life of St. Domitius (*ob.* 363) that Osrhoene and eastern Mesopotamia were the transit route for merchants involved in overland trade between Antioch in Syria I and Nisibis, which was then still under Roman control.¹¹² This would explain the relative frequency of references to inns in the

¹⁰⁹ We owe this suggestion to Michael Whitby.

¹¹⁰ Arthur Vööbus (ed./tr.), *Syriac and Arabic Documents regarding Legislation relative to Syrian Asceticism* (Stockholm, 1960), docs. no. II-IX, pp. 24-86.

¹¹¹ Cf. L. Dilleman, *Haute Mésopotamie orientale et pays adjacents* (Paris, 1962), 73-79.

¹¹² *Acta Graeca S. Dometii Martyris*, ed. J. Van den Gheyn, *Analecta Bollandiana* 19 (1900), 295-301 (routes between Nisibis and Resh'aina-Theodosiopolis), 315 (mention of a merchant who grazed his camels in the *territorium* of Cyrrhus in Euphratesia).

inscriptions and Syriac canon law documents.¹¹³ These are clearly distinguished from church guest-houses (*xenodocheia*).¹¹⁴ The life of Domitius also suggests that Arabs were a significant ethnic component on the open steppe inside the great bend of the Euphrates as merchants as well as transhumants.¹¹⁵ Archaeological surveys will certainly yield additional material evidence, but it seems unlikely that this will radically affect the general pattern suggested here.¹¹⁶

Aerial surveys indicate a sprinkling of fortified towns along the Khabur river, the eastern boundary of Osrhoene, few of which have been excavated.¹¹⁷ Some of these had army formations billeted in them. One of the more important was Thannourios (present-day Tell Tunaynir in Syria), a walled city and acropolis that lay hard against the frontier on the Khabur river. It was headquarters of a *numerus* of locally recruited cavalry archers (*equites sagittarii indigenae*). It was a frequent crossing point for Arabs raiding Osrhoene. In consequence, Justinian is said to have upgraded its fortifications and provided a stronger garrison.¹¹⁸ Ps.-Joshua saw no reason to mention Thannourios, although Timostratus *dux* of Osrhoene must have passed near it during his raid against Jabal Sinjar in the spring of 504 (§ 69). Another such place was the small fort and town site of Arabana or Oroba (present-day 'Araban in Syria), lying some 15 km. south Thannourios. It could

¹¹³ Rabbula, 'Admonitions for monks', Canon 3 in Vööbus, *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, 27. *SEG* 36, no. 1277. Cf. *IGLS* V no. 2068 (Bsherin, Phoenice Libanensis, 616 A.D.). The last-named hostel was certainly not built by passing troops, as the *IGLS* editors suppose, because Sasanid armies had occupied all northern Syria and Palestine by 613-14.

¹¹⁴ Rabbula, 'Commands and admonitions to Priests', Canon 22; 'Canons of Rabbula', no. 2 in *ibid.*, 42, 80. M. von Oppenheim and H. Lucas, 'Griechische und lateinische Inschriften aus Syrien, Mesopotamien und Kleinasien', *BZ* 14 (1905), nos. 92 and 94 (Tella-Constantina, 456 (?) and 513 A.D.).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 95 (Tella-Constantina, 6th c.), the funerary inscription of Qayum the goods salesman (Καίουμας παντ[ο]πώλης). Cf. Dilleman, *Haute Mésopotamie*, 88f., etc. The *Acta S. Dometii* mention Arabs living in skin tents in the *territorium* of Cyrrhus. The phenomenon certainly existed in Osrhoene and Mesopotamia as well. *Acta S. Dometii* (Van den Gheyn, 309).

¹¹⁶ E.g. B. Einwag, 'Vorberichte über die archäologische Geländebegehung in der Westgazira', *DM* 7 (1993), 23-43, where a trefoil cross (probably 6th c.) and other late antique spolia are noted in a small domed building at Shaykh Qamar. Tafel Ia.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Dilleman, *Haute Mésopotamie*, 79-85.

¹¹⁸ See the comment of D. Kennedy and D. Riley, *Rome's Desert Frontier from the Air* (London, 1990), 118-121, with map and aerial photo.

be the same as the variously reported *castellum Arabum* (3rd c.) or *castellum Arabionis* (4th c.). It had its own squadron of *equites sagittarii indigenae* in the early fifth century.¹¹⁹ A third site is present-day Marqada in Syria, lying on the middle course of the Khabur 67 km. north of Circesium. It has been suggested that Marqada was inhabited in late Roman times, but its ancient name is unknown and the site has not been surveyed.¹²⁰

The steppe had a scattering of non-fortified installations as well. An inscription mentions the foundation of an inn (πανδοκεῖον) some 17 km. southeast of Edessa on the Roman road to Batnan-Serug. Three caves were fitted out as stables, outside of which there was a structure built on a platform where travellers could spend the night. A cistern (φρ[έαρ]) was also dug at the site. Aurelius Dasius governor of Osrhoene carried out the work c. 260 A.D.¹²¹

Ps.-Joshua mentions many churches and monasteries outside the walls of Edessa. We also know that a Christian basilica was built for the monastery of St. Alexander in 471. It lies in the city's *territorium* at Houeidjit Halaoua. The Greek and Syriac foundation inscription names a certain Sergius as the archimandrite and the founder as 'bishop Nonnus'; it impossible to say whether this was Nonnus archbishop of Edessa or one of his suffragans, perhaps the bishop of Dausara. The city councillor Cosmas and his wife Cosmia (ἐλεούθερα) sponsored the nave mosaic. Their town of origin is unknown.¹²² This is tenuous evidence for a degree of economic expansion in rural Osrhoene in the decades before the great famine of 500-2.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 156, with plan and aerial photo.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 227f., with aerial photo.

¹²¹ SEG 36, no. 1277.

¹²² SEG 40, no. 1380 *bis-ter*. Cf. SEG 28, no. 1324. The Sergius in question lived at too early a date to be considered as a possible addressee of ps.-Joshua's chronicle.

¹²³ The degree of economic expansion in urban *territoria* during the late 5th and early 6th c. is a complex question. Cf. the arguments of G. Tate for Syria I and II in *Les Campagnes de la Syrie du Nord du IIe au VIIe siècle I: un exemple d'expansion démographique et économique à la fin de l'antiquité* (Paris, 1992), 303-332. Tate's analysis does not go far beyond the material evidence found in the Limestone Massif. For a comparative model, see F. R. Trombley, 'Monastic foundations in sixth-century Anatolia and their role in the social and economic life of the countryside', *Byzantine Saints and Monasteries*, ed. N. M. Vapori (Brookline, Mass., 1985), 45-59 = *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 30 (1985), 45-59.

A picture of rural society in the neighbouring province of Mesopotamia is found in the early chapters of John of Ephesus' *Lives of the Eastern Saints*.¹²⁴ It contains a history of the monastery of John of Urtaye, which lay just outside the walls north of Amid, and gives otherwise unknown information about Kawad's siege of the city in 502-3;¹²⁵ but most of the material in these biographies postdates the raid of the Sabir Huns in 515. It thus provides an important picture of the *territorium* of Amid during the period of recovery after the Persian War of 502-6.

MESOPOTAMIAN SOCIETY IN THE PERSIAN WAR OF 502-6

The Persian War of 502-6 created great social and cultural trauma in Osrhoene and Mesopotamia. Ps.-Joshua traces the experience of war back to the Hunnic invasion of 396/7, when Addai, *magister militum per Orientem*, sat with his army behind the walls of Edessa and let the enemy raid freely throughout Osrhoene (§ 9). Kawad's invasion of 502 marked a sharp break with the relative calm that prevailed on the frontiers in the fifth century.¹²⁶ Until this time the provincial troops under the *duces* of Osrhoene and Mesopotamia had as their main task the repair of fortifications and patrolling the frontier against periodic Arab raids.¹²⁷ An inscription from Khan al-Abyad on the route between Damascus and Palmyra sums up the problems of ensuring the security of the Syrian steppes and the provincials' imagined gratitude to the soldiers for these services. It is dedicated to count Silvinus, who was undoubtedly *dux* of Phoenice Libanensis (late 4th-5th c.). The site was probably a *mansio* or halting station on an imperial post road:¹²⁸

¹²⁴ John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, ed. and tr. E. W. Brooks, *PO* 17 (Paris, 1934), 1-307.

¹²⁵ 'History of the monastery of John Urtaya', *Lives of the Eastern Saints* 58, *PO* 19 (Paris, 1926), 218f. (564f.).

¹²⁶ Cf. Bury, *LRE* II 1-10.

¹²⁷ In general, see R. Grosse, *Römische Militärgeschichte von Gallienus bis zum Beginn der byzantinischen Themenverfassung* (Berlin, 1920), 272-320; Jones, *LRE*, 654-57.

¹²⁸ *IGLS* V no. 2704. The inscription clearly suggests that Silvinus also directed the construction of a dam or artificial water basin. The frankly polytheistic character of the inscription is contrasted by a Chi-Rho with the horizontal cross to one side of the inscription. These features put it sometime between 355-450 A.D.

O count (*comes*), you have restored a fortress ([*c*]astrum reddidisti) equipped with the greatest symmetry, on a plain so arid and hostile to travellers because of its vast open spaces, in case of the death of a neighbour whose fate is starvation, for nothing is more oppressive than this. Silvinus, guardian of the formidable *limes* and its cities (*limitis ur[biu]m[que] fortissimae custus*) and of the emperors by the confidence of those who honour them throughout the world, you have prepared (this land) so as to profit from rain-waters so that it can be maintained by the union of Bacchus and Ceres. So, traveller, go through the course of your journey auspiciously; accept the advantage and recite with praise the acts of a great-souled magistrate who shines in peace and in war. I pray to the gods above that he, supported by higher authority, will found (other) such difficult fortresses (to assault) for the emperors, and that he will rejoice in sons who will honour the deeds of their father.

Local commanders sometimes built installations in cooperation with ecclesiastical officials and monks. A mosaic inscription commemorating the construction of a hospice in 481/2, on the road from Tella-Constantina to Kiziltepe, gives the names of its founders, Cyrus, *comes* and *dux* of Mesopotamia, and Elijah, presbyter and archimandrite of an unnamed monastery.¹²⁹ Military commanders were also active builders in Cilicia and Isauria during and after Illus' rebellion in 484-488 where the *dux* was invested with the civil powers of provincial governor (*praeses*).¹³⁰ Known projects include the refurbishment of the fortifications of Pompeiopolis and a small bath building at Anemurium.¹³¹ The necropolis church was dedicated by an officer in the locally stationed *numerus*.¹³²

(i) Demographic Impact

The first few years of the War of 502-6 saw a gigantic demographic upheaval in Mesopotamian society. The central event was the siege and fall of Amid between 5 October 502 to 10-13 January 503 (§ 50, 53). It exercised a powerful influence on the provincials' imagination for decades to come. It is unknown how many people died in the preliminary fighting, but ps.-Joshua and ps.-Zachariah agree that some 80,000 corpses were carried out of the city's North Gate after the city capitulated. The fortifications of Amid were about one kilometre square

¹²⁹ SEG 41, no. 1511= C. Mango and M. M. Mango, 'Inscriptions de la Mésopotamie du Nord', *TM* 11 (1991), no. 2. The *dux* is otherwise unknown.

¹³⁰ E.g. SEG 37, nos. 1321-1322 (Pompeiopolis, 5th-6th c.).

¹³¹ SEG 37, no. 1271 (Anemurium, late 5th c.); 1321.

¹³² SEG 37, no. 1287 (Anemurium, 450-500 A.D.).

or 100 hectares, leaving only about 12.5 square metres per person. Amid would have been exceptionally crowded even with many fewer persons inside the walls; they would have filled the public squares, churches and rooftops of houses. Their numbers can be explained by large numbers of persons taking refuge there after evacuating their villages in the town's *territorium*; it is also quite probable that much of the rural population of Sophene, driven on by Kawad's highly mobile Hunnic cavalry, would have crossed the Tigris and taken refuge there as well (§ 50).¹³³ In practical terms, the figure of 80,000 persons could reflect a population of 30,000 living in Amid and its suburbs, along with the folk of some 50 large villages on the supposition that 1000 persons is a reasonable figure for such places.¹³⁴

Similarly, on 26 November 502, Nu'man's force of Lakhmid Arab cavalry raided the *territorium* of Harran, coming up by an unexpected route after the battle of Tell-Beshmai. Ps.-Joshua indicates that some 18,500 captives were taken. It was the time of the vintage, and he implies that many people normally resident inside the walls of Edessa and Harran were out in the fields (§52). The figure could represent the population of 15-20 villages. There can be no doubt that other agriculturalists and traders were also caught at installations along the route of the Lakhmid advance. The Persians and Huns meanwhile raided the *territorium* of Tella-Constantina (§ 51). They did so again in the operations of 503, this time extending the destruction as far as the *territoria* of Edessa (§ 58) and Batnan-Serug (§ 60).

These grim events had serious consequences for the defence of Osrhoene. Ps.-Joshua observes that the people of towns and fortresses less defensible than Amid began to contemplate fleeing to the more secure cities on the west bank of the Euphrates, and that Jacob of Serug wrote 'letters of exhortation to all the cities, encouraging (people) to trust in divine salvation and not flee' in the winter of 503. Anastasius at once dispatched troops to cover the towns of Osrhoene, but also to act as a police force to stop the provincials from fleeing (§ 54). Allowing the urban populations to flee in panic because of 'rumours of war'

¹³³ There is an important modern parallel to this in the run-up to the Japanese siege of Nanking in December 1937. I. Chang, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (London, 1997), 81f.

¹³⁴ Very little demographic work of this kind has been done. Cf. F. R. Trombley, 'War and society in rural Syria c. 502-613 A.D.: observations on the epigraphy', *BMGS* 21 (1997), 167-169, 177 and n. 56.

would have compromised the defensive network of roads, towns and fortresses.¹³⁵ These places relied on citizen militias strengthened by provincial vexillations to hold their *pedaturae* or sections of the walls that they repaired and maintained in peacetime. A rare epigraphic example of this is found at Emesa in Phoenice Libanensis. It commemorates the businessman Leontius' repair of twenty-three feet of the city wall (488/9 A.D.).¹³⁶ Batnan-Serug surrendered to the Persians in September 503, thanks to its broken-down fortifications (§ 63).¹³⁷ The security of the frontiers in the decades after the Persian War of 502-6 is symbolised in an undated inscription, probably from the reign of Justin I (518-27). It stood near a bridge not far from Nisibis on the frontier between Roman Osrhoene and Sasanid Arbayistan:¹³⁸

To the best-chosen emperor Justinus: his army of Oriens constructed (this monument) to his fame: a warning to the barbarian nation coming from a statue of the triumphal chariot.

(ii) *Religious Response*

The local churches tried to strengthen the argument by circulating stories about the supposed apotropaic value of prominent local cults. At Edessa, an inscription on one of the city gates containing the apocryphal reply of Christ to the Arab king Abgar promising the perpetual security of the city was seen as a palladium that protected the 'sacred space' enclosed by the fortifications. The Edessans saw proof of this when the Lakhmid phylarch Nu'man died after threatening to attack Edessa in 503. A Christian *amir* of the latter's tribal confederation is said to have warned him off with a reassuring argument that the Edessans must have repeated to themselves many times: 'Your majesty should not trouble to go to war against Edessa, for over it there is an irrevocable declaration of Christ whom they worship, that no enemy shall ever gain control of it' (§ 58). Nu'man's subsequent death, perhaps from erysipelas, was touted in Edessa as

¹³⁵ For the effect of 'rumours of war', see Trombley, 'War and society in rural Syria', 207-209.

¹³⁶ *JGLS* V no. 2246.

¹³⁷ Jacob of Serug was probably not in the city at that time. Cf. below § 54 and nn. 303-304.

¹³⁸ *Iustino imperatori dilectissimo exercitus eius Orientis gentem barbaram e curru statuatio cautionem ad gloriam construxit. CIL* III no. 212.

divine punishment for his blasphemous design - and doubtless with a deep sense of relief.

(iii) *Role of Bishops*

As elsewhere in the Late Roman *oikoumene*, the Syrian bishops began to play an increasingly important part in bolstering the morale of besieged cities and fortresses.¹³⁹ This transition became especially pronounced in the early sixth century. It was a consequence of a whole range of important civic functions being transferred to bishops. Existing practice was finally codified in a law of 24 June 530, which required them to pave roads, repair bridges, manage public grain expenditures, erect and repair aqueducts, and procure wood to heat the public baths. They were also supposed to inspect public works and review the accounts pertaining to them.¹⁴⁰ The older practice is best reflected in a building inscription of 476 at Chersonese in the Crimea from the reign of Zeno:¹⁴¹

Emperor Caesar Zeno, pious, victorious, trophy-bearing, great perpetual Augustus says: Our most emulous piety (φιλοτιμησαμένη ἡ αὐτῶν εὐσέβεια) has made a gift of monies collected in this city of ours as in all the cities from the revenue office - I am speaking of the vicarate of the most devoted *ballista* artillerymen - through whom we have rebuilt the walls for the safety of this same city and express thanks in setting up this inscription in perpetual remembrance of our reign. And this tower was rebuilt in the year 512 (of the era of Chersonese) in the fourteenth year of the indiction, with the most exalted count Diogenes accomplishing (the work).

The older system was put under great pressure during the Persian War, and there is clear evidence of bishops being involved in the construction and repair of fortifications near the end of hostilities in late

¹³⁹ For this general period, cf. N. Garsoian, 'Le Rôle de l'hérarchie chrétienne dans les rapports diplomatiques entre Byzance et les Sassanides', *REA* N.S. 10 (1973-74), 120-122, 129f. In later wars bishops played an important role in gathering intelligence about Sasanid Persia. A. D. Lee, 'Evagrius, Paul of Nisibis and the problem of loyalties in the mid-sixth century', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44 (1993), 569-585.

¹⁴⁰ *Cod. Iust.* 1.4.26. The provincial epigraphy of the Roman East illustrates this graphically, e.g. *IGLS* I 288.

¹⁴¹ *CIG* IV no. 8621. We prefer the emendation α<υ>τῶν (in the sense of ἡμῶν) to the editors' αὐτῶν.

506.¹⁴² The most important new project was the fortification of Dara at the southeastern corner of Tur 'Abdin. Thomas archbishop of Amid personally supervised the works, but delegated many tasks to his clergy (§ 90 and notes). A smaller-scale project using the same organisational methods is known from Bouz el-Khanzir in Syria I, a province lying outside the main zone of military operations, but nevertheless at risk from Lakhmid Arab raids. The new fort (καταφύγιον, 'refuge') lay in the *territorium* of Anasartha-Theodoropolis and was completed a few weeks before the peace treaty was agreed between the Roman and Persian plenipotentiaries on or before 28 November 506:¹⁴³

(Cross) The refuge of God, your safety, O Christ! It was built by the command of bishop Stephen of Theodor(opolis?) and Sergius the presbyter and John the lector and manager [of the church's estates] (in the year) 817 (of the Seleucid era) on 1[.] November.

Ps.-Joshua mentions only one instance of this, when in 505/6 Sergius bishop of Birta (present-day Birejik) probably rebuilt the city wall, afterwards receiving part of his expenses back from the emperor. The same was done at Europus in Euphratesia, but here provincials bore most of the cost (§ 91).

In the War of 502-6, the Syrian clergy assisted the military authorities and strengthened the resolve of the civil population in different ways. So, for example, an unnamed bishop or presbyter (ιερεὺς) is said to have negotiated an end to the slaughter in Amid after the city fell;¹⁴⁴ he had apparently migrated there before the Persian investment began in October 502.¹⁴⁵ In 503 Bar-Hadad bishop of Tella-Constantina is reported to have met Kawad outside the fortifications with gifts and to have begged him not to assault the city.¹⁴⁶ When the mission failed, Bar-Hadad gave great moral support to the defence (§ 58):

¹⁴² The evidence is summarised by C. Capizzi, *L'imperatore Anastasio I (491-518)* (Rome, 1969), 206f., 209f., 214-228.

¹⁴³ *IGLS*, no. 270, with a suggested emendation of the town's name.

¹⁴⁴ Procopius invariably uses the term *ιερεὺς* to designate Christian bishops, as for example Bar-Hadad of Tella-Constantina. See next two notes.

¹⁴⁵ Procopius, *Wars* 1.7.30-32.

¹⁴⁶ Procopius, *Wars* 2 13.14.

They guarded the city with care, night and day, while the holy Bar-Hadad would go round visiting them, praying for them and blessing them. He praised their diligence, gave them encouragement, and sprinkled holy water on them *and on the city wall*. He also carried the eucharistic bread with him on his rounds to enable them to have communion at their posts, so that on this account none of them should abandon his guard and go down from the wall. He even went out confidently to the Persian king and spoke with him and mollified him, and when Kawad saw the man's seriousness and appreciated the vigilance of the Romans, it seemed to him pointless to be doing nothing at Tella with the whole army which he had with him.

It is quite possible that Ephrem Syrus's invocatory hymns on the mid-fourth century sieges of Nisibis were a part of this liturgy, as one telling passage suggests: 'Place within you the living body, that it may be a wall for your lives.'¹⁴⁷ The defence of fortresses was risky whenever regular soldiers cooperated with *ad hoc* militias, who might bolt at the first sign of a determined assault. Here, as at Edessa, Christian clergy and commanders alike guaranteed the integrity of the city's 'sacred space' by pointing to the symbols of salvation both material and spiritual.¹⁴⁸ The practice of parading icons and relics was a direct consequence of this.¹⁴⁹

(iv) *Economic Impact*

Another feature of the War of 502-6 was the wrecking of the provincial infrastructure in Osrhoene by the Sasanid and Roman armies. This included the destruction of habitable villages and many agricultural installations. When Kawad's army reached Edessa in September 503, the civil authorities (possibly instructed by Areobindus) ordered the demolition of all inns and monasteries near the fortifications to deprive the enemy of points of refuge and to provide

¹⁴⁷ *Hymn* 13.21 cited in S. Bonian, 'Saint Ephrem on war, Christian suffering and the eucharist', *Parole de l'Orient* 11 (1983), 160. We owe this suggestion to Clive Havard.

¹⁴⁸ Another illustration of this, dating from the sixth- and seventh-century Avar and Slav sieges of Thessalonica, is found in the *Miracula* of St. Demetrius: 'While he held the episcopate, the aforementioned father John encouraged the defenders not to be despondent ... [He] brought courage to the citizens ... by remaining with them on the wall until they were fully prepared for combat.' *Miracula S. Demetrii. Les Plus Anciens Recueils des miracles de Saint Démétrius et la pénétration des Slaves dans les Balkans*, ed. P. Lemerle I (Paris, 1979), 181.

¹⁴⁹ Thomas archbishop of Apamea (Syria II) exhibited a supposed relic of the true cross during Khusrau I's siege of the city in 540. The wood was said to have great apotropaic power (φυλακτῆριον μέγα), but it is not certain if the relic was carried round the walls. Procopius, *Wars* 2.11.14-19.

clear fields of fire for the artillery sited on the fortifications.¹⁵⁰ Other measures included burning down the village of Kephars Selem, cutting down hedges in the orchards and parks near the city wall, and felling the trees. In addition, martyr relics and certainly the silver liturgical vessels were brought in from the rural chapels (§ 59), among them the church of St. Sergius and that of Sts. Cosmas and Damian. The *territorium* of Edessa took years to recover from this to judge from the fact that Osrhoene and Mesopotamia were given a complete tax remission for 505/6. A one-third reduction was also granted to Euphratesia, apparently because the *territorium* of Mabbug-Hierapolis was used as a staging area for armies entering the zone of operations (§ 78). A return to pre-war economic conditions is suggested by the completion of a mosaic in the narthex of a monastery church in or near Callinicum. The Syriac inscriptions indicate its completion in August 509.¹⁵¹

Kawad's attack on Edessa kept the price of wheat high right through the war years. Many people had left the land, migrating to Euphratesia, and many storage installations, draught animals and trees had been destroyed. It was perhaps thought unwise to practice agriculture anywhere except near the walls of a large city. But with armies comprising some 40-50,000 men in the zone of operations,¹⁵² the price of grain remained very dear, approximating to the famine conditions that had existed in 500-2.¹⁵³ Between 502-5, prices seem to have remained steady at 4 *modii* of wheat and 6 *modii* of barley to the *solidus*. Much of the rural population in Osrhoene had migrated to safety in Euphratesia, so the figure represents a reduced number of both producers and consumers. It was only after the early summer harvest of 505 that prices began to drop, falling to 6 *modii* of wheat and 10 of barley to the *solidus*. This came partly as a result of agriculturalists returning to the land with a feeling of greater security, after Celer and Areobindus carried the war into Sasanid territory in 504.

¹⁵⁰ The Kuomintang forces did this for identical reasons during the Japanese siege of Nanking in December, 1937. Chang, *Rape of Nanking*, 69f.

¹⁵¹ SEG 41, no. 1496.

¹⁵² Cf. Jones, *LRE*, 654-657.

¹⁵³ On the famine, see J. Durliat, *De la Ville antique à la ville byzantine: le problème des subsistances* (Rome, 1990), 402-420, etc. Cf. H. Leclainche, 'Crises économiques à Édesse (494-506) d'après la chronique du pseudo Josué le Stylite', *Pallas* 27 (1980), 89-100.

A NOTE ON CHRONOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

The basic feature of the chronicle as a historiographic genre is the presentation of events in an annalistic format. This requires fitting them into an accepted chronological reference frame and reporting those of each year in sequence. The eastern provinces of the Later Roman Empire had diverse systems of computing years, months and days. Those in use between 494-506 included the regnal years of emperors, consular dates and the era of the province. The system worked somewhat differently at Edessa. As a Macedonian foundation later incorporated into the Seleucid empire, Edessa used the so-called Seleucid calendar. It was devised shortly after Seleucus I Nicator prevailed at the battle of Gaza against Demetrius Poliorcetes (summer 312 B.C.) and remained in use for centuries, even after the Muslim conquest of Osroene in 639. It also went by such diverse names as the 'era of the Greeks', 'era of the Byzantines' ('Ρωμαῖοι at Amid), and 'era of Alexander'.¹⁵⁴ In late Roman times it was used as the provincial era of Osroene, Mesopotamia and Syria II in contracts, municipal decrees and public registers. It turns up in foundation inscriptions on churches and public buildings, and in funerary inscriptions. The register of a parchment deed of sale composed in 243 A.D. gives some idea of the range of dating systems available to the citizens of Edessa:¹⁵⁵

In the sixth year of emperor Marcus Aurelius Gordianus pious fortunate Augustus; in the consulship of Annius Arrianus and Tribonius Pappus; in the month of Iyar (= May) in the year 554 of the former [Seleucid] reckoning; and in the year 31 of the freedom of the renowned [city] Antoni[ni]ana Edessa, the Colonia Metropolis Aurelia Alexandria; in the term of residence (?) of Marcus Aurelius Antiochus son of Bel-shu *eques Romanus*; and in the second term as general (στρατηγός) of Marcus Aurelius Abgar son of Ma'nu, son of Agga *eques Romanus*, and of Abgar son of Hafsai son of Bar Kammar, on the ninth day of the aforesaid month.

The witness of ps.-Joshua and the provincial epigraphy suggest that most of these dating systems had gone into abeyance by the late fifth century. The Seleucid era seems to have prevailed in the provincial

¹⁵⁴ Y. E. Meimarīs *et alii*, *Chronological Systems in Roman-Byzantine Palestine and Arabia: The Evidence of Dated Greek Inscriptions* (Athens, 1992), 53f. V. Grumel, *Traité d'études byzantines I. La chronologie* (Paris, 1958), 209f.

¹⁵⁵ Translated with modifications from the text of C. C. Torrey (ed. pr.), 'A Syriac parchment from Edessa of the year 243 A.D.', *Zeitschrift für Semitistik* 10 (1935), 36-40.

registers along with the year of the indiction, the fifteen-year tax assessment cycle implemented by Diocletian and given its final form by Constantine the Great on 1 September 312.¹⁵⁶ This is evident, for example, in the inscriptions of Tella-Constantina in Mesopotamia (late 5th-early 6th c.).¹⁵⁷ Ps.-Joshua gives the Seleucid date for each year between 494-506, but mentions the indiction only implicitly, when the subject of the annual tax assessment comes up. For example, Peter archbishop of Edessa journeyed to Constantinople sometime between July and the end of October 500 to petition for a remission of the total tax paid by the agricultural smallholders of Osrhoene (συντέλεια) (§ 29). This trip coincided with the new year of the indiction, by which time the tax requirements for the coming year were supposed to have been worked out in the *bureaux* of the praetorian prefect of Oriens. Ps.-Joshua did not have to state this weighty fact directly, for it was obvious to his readership.

Not once does ps.-Joshua give the regnal year of Anastasius. Nor does he mention the names of the consuls. He does, however, report the publication of three imperial edicts between 498-502: the ban on the Iyar festival, the abolition of wild beast hunts, and the cancellation of the *chrysargyron* or *collatio lustralis*, the much-hated tax on urban tradesmen.¹⁵⁸ The prescript and postscripts of such documents invariably give the day and month according the Roman calendar, the place of issue, and name of the imperial officials to whom they are addressed, often the praetorian prefect, although a disproportionate number of Anastasius' laws were directed to Celer the *magister officiorum*. The edicts which survive fall into two categories: those dated by the consuls of the year, and those from which the date, but not the addressee, were deleted by the commission that edited the *Codex Iustinianus* in 528-34.¹⁵⁹ In every instance ps.-Joshua omits the dating formula, summarises the edict, and inserts it into his annalistic scheme. Of the three laws he summarises, only the cancellation of the *chrysargyron* survives in the *Codex Iustinianus*, and its date has been

¹⁵⁶ Grumel, *Chronologie*, 192-203. Jones, *LRE*, 61-68, 451-456. Meimaris, *Chronological Systems*, 32-34.

¹⁵⁷ M. von Oppenheim and H. Lucas, 'Griechische und lateinische Inschriften aus Syrien, Mesopotamien und Kleinasien', *BZ* 14 (1905), 60f., nos. 92-94.

¹⁵⁸ For the sources, see Jones, *LRE*, 1178f. Anastasius' laws are indexed at *Corpus Iuris Civilis II: Codex Iustinianus*, ed. P. Krueger (Berlin, 1954), 508.

¹⁵⁹ Honoré, *Tribonian*, 44-53, 56f. Cf. Bury, *LRE* II 395f. Jones, *LRE*, 477.

deleted.¹⁶⁰ Ps.-Joshua's internal chronology puts the arrival and publication of the edict between 1 May and 5 June 498 (§ 31).¹⁶¹

Ps.-Joshua computes all his dates by the Seleucid year, which ran from 1 October to 30 September. He also adopts common practice in Osrhoene of using the twelve Syrian names of the months.¹⁶² In the translation we have substituted their Roman equivalents for the sake of clarity. The Syrian months are, from the beginning of the Seleucid year:

I Teshrin	= October	Nisan	= April
II Teshrin	= November	Iyar	= May
I Kanun	= December	Khaziran	= June
II Kanun	= January	Tammuz	= July
Shubat	= February	Ab	= August
Adar	= March	Ilul	= September

In seven instances, ps.-Joshua also gives the day of the week.¹⁶³ We find that he has each time reported it correctly.¹⁶⁴ This is a strong argument in favour of the chronological accuracy of his work:

<i>Roman Date</i>	<i>Day of Week</i>	<i>Syrian Date</i>
17 May 496	Friday	17 Iyar 807
23 October 499	Saturday	23 I Teshrin 811
22 August 502	Thursday	22 Ab 813
5 October 502	Saturday	5 I Teshrin 814
17 September 503	Wednesday	17 Ilul 814
24 September 503	Wednesday	24 Ilul 814
19 March 504	Friday	19 Adar 815

Another feature of the chronicle is the reporting of cosmic events, particularly eclipses, earthquakes and comets. It is possible to date comets from the Chinese annals because of Edessa's latitude in the northern hemisphere.¹⁶⁵ Ps.-Joshua mentions the sighting of a comet in

¹⁶⁰ *Cod. Iust.* 11.1 (Krueger II 423).

¹⁶¹ The bracketing dates are found in §§ 30, 32.

¹⁶² Grumel, *Chronologie*, 174.

¹⁶³ §§ 27, 36, 47, 50, 60, 62, 68.

¹⁶⁴ See the table in F. K. Ginzel, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie* III (Leipzig, 1914), 128-131. For a different system of calculation, see E. J. Bickerman, *Chronology of the Ancient World* (London, 1980), 60.

¹⁶⁵ Ho Peng Yoke, 'Ancient and mediaeval observations of comets and novae in Chinese sources', *Vistas in Astronomy* 5 (1962), 127-225.

January 500 (the 'spear of war') (§ 37), but the correct date appears to be 13 February 501.¹⁶⁶ As to eclipses, computer programmes exist for calculating the path of the zone of totality and its penumbra. The chronicler mentions a 'solar' event that has sometimes been mistaken for an eclipse (§ 36), but a close reading of the text suggests it was actually caused by some form of ash or dust.¹⁶⁷ In contrast, seismic history can only be ascertained from literary sources and archaeological data. Ps.-Joshua reports major earthquakes at Nicopolis in Armenia I and Arsamosata in Sophene (September 499) and at Nicomedia, Ptolemais, Sidon and Tyre (22 August 502). The earlier earthquake catalogues require updating in the light of recent excavations.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ See below, § 37, n. 176.

¹⁶⁷ See below, § 36, n. 171.

¹⁶⁸ N. N. Ambraseys, 'A note on the chronology of Willis' list of earthquakes in Palestine and Syria', *Bulletin of the Seismological Society of America* 52 (1962), 77-80; D. H. Amiran, 'A revised earthquake catalogue of Palestine', *Israel Exploration Journal* 1 (1950-51), 223-246. The earthquake catalogue of the Later Roman Empire is largely based on Theophanes, John Malalas, Marcellinus Comes, the Paschal Chronicle, etc. Cf. Grumel, *Chronologie*, 478, whose dates differ from ours because they derive from Martin's edition of ps.-Joshua.

SIGLA

MS.	Cod. Vat. Syr. 162
< >	Supplement or emendation
[]	Lacuna in manuscript
()	Idiomatic expansion
1-101 in margin	Chapters ed. Wright, <i>The Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite</i>
235-317 in text	Pages ed. Chabot, <i>Incerti auctoris ps.-Dionysianum</i> I

A HISTORICAL NARRATIVE OF THE PERIOD OF
DISTRESS¹ WHICH OCCURRED IN EDESSA, AMID,
AND ALL MESOPOTAMIA

Sergius, most excellent of men, priest and abbot:²

1

I have received the letter of your pious³ Holiness, in which you direct me to write for you, as it were, the memorial of (the time) when the locusts came, the sun was dimmed, there was earthquake, famine, and plague, and the war of the Romans and Persians. There are also some extravagant eulogies of me in it, which make me feel great embarrassment in private, because in reality not one of them is applicable to me. I would like to write down the things which (pertain) to you, but the eye of my mind is unable to observe and perceive as it (truly) is the wonderful robe which your vigorous will has woven for you and with which it has clothed you. It has become manifestly clear that you glow with the love that fulfils the law,⁴ for you are concerned not only for the brothers who are under your direction at the present time, but also for all lovers of learning who in the future will enter your blessed monastery. By means of writings, you wish, in your care (for them), to leave behind memorials of the punishments [236] inflicted in our times on account of our sins, so that when they read and see what happened to us, they may guard against our sins and escape our punishments. One has to feel awe at your abundant love, which is shed forth upon all men, not failing or vanishing. I cannot, however, present it as it (truly) is, since I have not been close to its operation, nor do I

¹ Or: A CHRONOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE OF THE DISTRESS.

² On the prooemium of this work (§§ 1-6), see our general remarks in the Introduction, pp. xii-xiii, and the detailed analysis of Riad, *Preface*, especially pp. 74-100.

³ Lit.: 'God-loving'.

⁴ Cf. Romans 13 : 10.

know (how) to talk about it on the basis of the (single) audience which I once had (with you).⁵

- 2 Like Jonathan, the true friend, you have tied yourself to me in love, but the bonding of Jonathan's soul with David's,⁶ after seeing that the giant was killed by his hand and the (Israelite) army was saved, was not as great as this, because he loved (David) for his noble deeds, but you have loved me more than yourself although you have not seen anything noble in me. Neither is Jonathan's deliverance of David from death at the hands of Saul worthy of admiration on the scale of this (graciousness) of yours, for he was merely repaying a debt. (David), after all, had previously delivered him from death and saved him and the whole of his father's family from death at the hands of the Philistine.⁷ Now I have done nothing comparable to this for you, yet you are perpetually interceding with God for me, that I may be delivered from Satan, and that he may not slay me for my sins. However, it is appropriate to say that you love me as David did Saul. Like him, you are so intoxicated by the abundance of your kindness that, on account of the fervour of your love, you do not realise what my (true) measure is, but you attribute to me more than I possess.⁸ In the

⁵ Expressions of modesty and protestations by the author that his work is merely a response to a request from another are frequently found in the prooemia of literary works of antiquity and later periods; cf. above, p. xiii and n. 3.

⁶ 1 Samuel 18 : 1.

⁷ Cf. 1 Samuel 17 and 19-20.

⁸ Comparisons (*synkriseis*) were a regular part of rhetorical education (cf., e.g., the *Progymnasmata* of 'Hermogenes' and Aphthonius, in L. Spengel, *Rhetores Graeci* II, 14-15 and 42-44. They included both persons and actions (*prosopa* and *pragmata*, *ibid.*, 42.29-30); and ps.-Joshua here employs both that which 'puts the one ahead, praising also the other to which we prefer it'[Jonathan's love of David] and that of equality [David's love of Saul] (*ibid.*, 14.25-29). That the mainspring of a pupil's achievement is the passionate love of his master for him is an old theme of Greek philosophical literature, going back to the Socratic model (cf. H.-I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (London, 1956), pp. 29-33). Comparison of different kinds of love is a widespread literary *topos* (cf. Curtius, *Literature*, pp. 116-117, n. 26), and 'the love of a requester' was often linked to 'the affected modesty of an author' (cf. Riad, *Preface*, p. 84). It is not surprising that in a Christian context, biblical rather than classical Greek models were preferred for the love of master and pupil. As Riad, *Preface*, p. 83 has observed, the model of David and Jonathan is found in Christian literature in the farewell speech of Gregory Thaumaturgus to Origen (cf. *Grégoire le Thaumaturge: Remerciement à Origène*, ed./trans. H. Crouzel, Sources chrétiennes 148 (Paris, 1969), VI, §§ 85-88, p. 130/131). In ps.-Joshua, these comparisons serve both to highlight the praise of the addressee (who is compared ultimately to David) and the affected modesty

past, you have remedied my deficiency by the instruction contained in your letters, taking as much care over me as parents do over their children, [237] attending to all their needs while receiving no benefit (in return). Today, however, in your discretion you have humbled yourself and requested me to write for you what is beyond my capacity. In this very (matter) you are especially magnanimous, for although you understand these things better than I myself do, you (nevertheless) wish to learn them from me.

I will not begrudge you or decline (to do) what you have directed, but you should know, however, that even when I saw these signs that occurred and the punishments which followed them, I thought that they should be written down and preserved in a memorial, and not (be allowed to) pass into oblivion. Having regard to the feebleness of my mind and the ignorance of my soul, I held back from doing it, but now that you have directed me to do this very thing, I am as frightened as someone who cannot swim well who has been ordered to go down into deep water. Since I trust on your prayers to help me out, continually offered by you to God on my behalf, I believe that by the providence which (saves men) from drowning, I shall be drawn up from the sea into which you have thrown me, being (allowed to) swim in its shallows in accordance with my ability, since its depths are unfathomable. For who can properly tell of the things done by God in his wisdom for the extirpation of sins and the punishment of transgressions? Indeed, a full understanding⁹ of the divine economy is hidden even from the angels. You can see this from the parable of the tares in the Gospel: when the servants of the householder said to him, 'Do you want us to go and weed them out?' he said to them - he who (alone) knew things as they (really) were - 'No, lest in weeding out the tares you also uproot with them [238] the wheat'.¹⁰ But this we (can) say, according to our knowledge: our punishments came about in such profusion because of the extent of our sins, and if the divine protection had not been bound round the world so that it should not be dissolved, all human life might have come to an end, For in what times did such

of the author (compared ultimately to Saul). It is likely that this ultimate comparison of David and Saul was suggested by that of David and Jonathan, but it is interesting to note that *David's* affected modesty in relation to Saul (1 Sam. 24 : 15 and 26 : 20) had already become a literary *topos* in Jerome (cf. Curtius, *Literature*, p. 84).

⁹ ἁπλοῦς, 'exactness'.

¹⁰ Matt. 13 : 28-29.

afflictions occur with (such) severity, except those in which we live? Because the cause of (the afflictions) has not been eliminated, they have still <not> stopped. Along with that <which> we saw with our eyes, heard with our ears, and through which we lived, the news from far and near also terrified <us>,¹¹ and the catastrophes which happened in one place after another: fearful earthquakes, the flattening of cities, famines and plagues, wars and tumults, the capture and exile of (whole) regions, and the destruction and burning of churches.

4 As these things have astonished you also by their multiplicity, you have commissioned me to write them down in words of sadness and sorrow which will impress readers and listeners. I understand that you have said this (to me) out of your zeal for virtue, so that there should be remorse in those who hear them, and that they should be brought to repentance. Nevertheless, you should be aware that it is one thing to write dolefully, but another (to write) truthfully. Anyone who has a natural eloquence may, if he so wishes, write sad and sorrowful narratives, but I am plain of speech.¹² What I shall commemorate in this book is what all people in our country will testify to be true, and it is up to those who read or hear it, after examining it if they so wish, to come to repentance. But perhaps someone might say, 'What is the utility (to be derived) from these things by those who read them, if exhortation is not mingled with the account?' [239] As one who is unable to do this, I answer that the punishments which came upon us are sufficient to admonish us and those who come after us, and that by the memorial and the reading of them, they will teach <us>¹³ that they were sent upon us because of our sins. If they did not teach us this, they would indeed be without utility for us, but it is impossible to assert this, for punishments can assuredly be a substitute for us in place of teaching. All believers under heaven may testify that they were sent upon us because of our sins, following the word of the blessed Paul, who says, 'When we fall under judgement from our Lord, we are being

¹¹ MS.: 'me'.

¹² 2 Cor. 11 : 6. On the *topos* of the appropriateness of a plain as against a rhetorical style in historical works, cf. above, p. xiii. That of the utility of history as a guide for future actions and generations also goes back to classical historians: cf. Herodotus 1.1; Thucydides 1.22.4; Lucian, *How to write History* 42; and on the *topos* in late antique and medieval writers, Simon, 'Untersuchungen I', pp. 78-83; Riad, *Preface*, pp. 60 and 93.

¹³ Read تلعنه (Wright). MS.: تلعه.

punished in order that we may not be condemned with the world.¹⁴ For the punishment of men in this world is entirely for the purpose of restraining them from their sins and making easier for them the judgement of the world to come. A double reward will be given to those who are punished on account of sinners while themselves having committed no sin, but the mercy which occurs all the time, even for the unworthy, is because of the kindness, grace, and patience of God, who wills that this world should survive until the time appointed in his unerring knowledge.

It is evident that this is so¹⁵ from the demonstrations of the Holy Scriptures, and from the things which happened to us, about which we intend to write. For look, the afflictions of famine and plague bore down on us at the time of the locusts, until we were close to being reduced to destruction. Then God had compassion on us, undeserving as we were, and gave us a brief breathing-space from the afflictions pressing in upon us. This (happened), as I have said, because of [240] his grace. After we were refreshed, he changed the punishments and struck us by means of 'the Assyrian' designated 'the rod of anger'.¹⁶ In saying that God struck us with the Persians, I do not abrogate their freedom, nor, following God, do I bring forward the accusation of their presumption,¹⁷ but when I consider that for our sins he inflicted no punishment on them,¹⁸ I conclude that he struck us by means of them. The ill will of that nation¹⁹ became especially clear in the fact that they showed no mercy to those who were given into their power, for to show their delight it was their custom to rejoice in the misfortune of men. Indeed, the prophet reproaches them for this very thing, and when

¹⁴ 1 Cor. 11 : 32.

¹⁵ The text which follows, up to n. 29, belongs to the substituted folio 66 of the MS., and is apparently shorter than the text of the original folio 66 which it replaced. Cf. the Introduction, pp. xxiii-xxiv.

¹⁶ Isaiah 10 : 5. 'Assyrian' of course here designates the Persians.

¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 7-15. The passage is difficult. Possibly translate: 'nor do I attribute to God the blame for their presumption'.

¹⁸ Roman military successes after mid-503 do not support ps.-Joshua's thesis of Persian immunity from chastisement. Cf. the operational raid in 504 of Areobindus, *magister militum per Orientem*. During its march around Tur 'Abdin, his army is said to have killed 10,000 Persian and Armenian men (mostly civilian inhabitants of Arzanene and Zabdicene), taken 30,000 women and children captive along with 120,000 animals, and to have destroyed a 7,000-man force dispatched against it from Nisibis. Cf. below, § 75.

¹⁹ Or: 'The will of that wicked nation'.

prophesying about the destruction of Babylon says, as from the mouth of the Lord, 'I was angry with my people for they dishonoured my inheritance, and I delivered them into your hands, but you showed them no mercy.'²⁰ Similarly, (the Persians) for their merciless delight inflicted misery on us, as they are so accustomed, even though the 'staff of their blow'²¹ did not reach our bodies (in Edessa) and they could not gain the mastery of our city, since the promise of Christ given to the believing king Abgar could not be annulled. He said, 'Your city shall be blessed, and no enemy shall ever have mastery over it.'²² Nevertheless, through the believers who were plundered, captured, killed, or massacred in other cities which were taken, and who became like mud in the streets,²³ all who have learned to suffer with those who suffer²⁴ have tasted a fair amount of suffering. Even those, furthermore, who were far removed from it, [241] were tormented by

²⁰ Isaiah 47 : 6.

²¹ Ibid., 10 : 5.

²² For the alleged promise of Christ to Abgar Ukkama, cf., e.g., *Doctrina Addai*, p. 3 (tr. Howard, p. 9); Jacob of Serug, *Letter 20* (ed. Olinde, p. 129); Procopius, *Wars* 2.12.26. On the origin and dissemination of this sentence, cf. Segal, *Edessa*, pp. 73-76; H. J. W. Drijvers, 'The Abgar Legend', *New Testament Apocrypha* I, ed. W. Schneemelcher and R. McL. Wilson (Cambridge, 1991), 492-500. Whatever the origin of the statement may have been, by the 6th century it reflected the apotropaic hopes of populations threatened by barbarian attack all over the Roman Orient. Copies of Jesus' alleged letter were erected as inscriptions on the gates of many towns and fortresses. Examples survive at Ephesus and Euchaita in Asia Minor, and at Philippi in Macedonia. For Philippi: D. Feissel, *Recueil des Inscriptions chrétiennes de Macédoine du IIIe au VIe siècle*, BCH Supplément 8 (Paris, 1983), no. 222 (5th-6th c.). The Greek of the inscription at Ephesus does not correspond exactly to the Syriac: 'and he will make a sufficiency for your city so that no one of your enemies will have authority over it or shall ever' (καὶ ποιήσει εἰς τὴν πόλιν σου τὸ ἱκανὸν πρὸς τὸ μηδένα τῶν ἐχθρῶν τῶν σὼν τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταύτης ἔχειν ἢ σchein ποτέ). H. Grégoire (ed.), *Recueil des Inscriptions grecques chrétiennes de l'Asie Mineure* I (Paris, 1922), no. 109. Cf. H. Wankel, *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*, la (Bonn, 1979), no. 46 (5th-6th c.), whose transcription differs radically from that given by Grégoire. Near Euchaita: *Studia Pontica III: Recueil des inscriptions grecques et latines du Pont et de l'Arménie*, edd. J. G. C. Anderson, F. Cumont, H. Grégoire (Brussels, 1910), no. 210 (5th-6th c.). One of the Nessana papyri (Palaestina III, 6th-7th c.) contains a longer recension. *Excavations at Nessana II: Literary Papyri*, edd. L. Casson and E. Hettich (Princeton, 1950), no. 7.

²³ Isaiah 10 : 6.

²⁴ Cf. Rom. 12 : 15.

fear for their lives on account of their lack of faith, for they thought that the enemy would gain the mastery of Edessa, as he had of other cities.²⁵

These (are matters) about which we are going to write for you, but since according to the saying of the wise man Solomon, 'War is produced by provocation',²⁶ and you wish to learn this very thing, (namely) from what causes it was provoked, I wish <to> make known to you in a few words where the causes originated, even though it may seem that I am speaking about things whose time has passed. Shortly afterwards, I shall then inform you also (of the events) when these causes gained in strength. For even though this war was stirred up (by God) against us on account of our sins, nevertheless the cause arose on account of political circumstances²⁷ which I wish to relate for you,²⁸ in order that you should be clearly acquainted with this matter, so as not to be deceived with some silly people into blaming him who is in government, the faithful emperor Anastasius. He is not the origin of the war. On the contrary, the fact is that it was <provoked>²⁹ long ago, as you will be able to see from what I (am now about to) write for you.³⁰

6

²⁵ Ps.-Joshua is here thinking of Amid in Mesopotamia, Batnan-Serug in Osrhoene, Theodosiopolis-Erzerum in Armenia Interior (which had a quasi-provincial structure) and Martyropolis in the Armenian satrapies. Cf. M. Whitby, 'Notes on some Justinianic constructions', *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher* 23 (1987), 106f. and notes. On the quasi-provincial status of Armenia Interior and the satrapies *ante* 527, see N. Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian: the Political Conditions Based on the Naḫarar System*, ed./tr. N. Garsoian (Lisbon, 1970), 85-101, where the author observes that '[they] bore the characteristics of independent possessions, externally attached to the Empire but entirely autonomous in internal life and organisation' (p. 85). But cf. *ibid.*, 409, n. 22b.

²⁶ Proverbs 20 : 18; 24 : 6. On the surprising translation of the Peshitta of these passages (the translation quoted here), cf. Riad, *Preface*, 98-9.

²⁷ , cf. πράγματα ('political circumstances').

²⁸ The pattern of a prooemium followed by an account of the causes of a war preceding the narrative of the war itself is the classical one for a political history: cf. Thucydides 1.1-23 and 24-146; Lucian, *How to write History* 14. Ps.-Joshua holds in the main to this pattern, but inserts his 'Chronicle of apostasy and chastisement' (§§ 25-46) between his account of the causes of the war and that of the war itself. Cf. above, pp. xiv-xv.

²⁹ Here begins folio 67 (cf. above, n. 15). The remainder of the sentence, however, is also written out on folio 66v.

³⁰ At this point on folio 66v appears the scribal note discussed in the Introduction, pp. xxiv-xxvi. The criticisms of Anastasius' policy that ps.-Joshua tries to rebut here and elsewhere originated in Osrhoene. They were probably a consequence of the depopulation and damage caused by Kawad's invasion of 503, and of the hardship

7 [242] In 609 (= 297/8 A.D.) the Romans <plundered>³¹ the city of Nisibis, and it was under their control for sixty-five years.³² After Julian's death in Persia in 674 (= 362/3 A.D.), the next Roman emperor Jovian preferred peace above all else and for this reason ceded control of Nisibis to the Persians for a hundred and twenty years. It was to be restored to its masters at the end of this period, which came at the time of the Roman emperor Zeno,³³ but the Persians did not want to return the city, and this gave rise to the quarrel.³⁴

8 Furthermore, Romans and Persians had entered into an agreement that if they had need of each other while at war with another nation, they would assist by giving either three hundred fighting men along with their weapons and horses, or three hundred staters for each man,

imposed on the provincials by their having to support upwards of 40-50,000 Roman soldiers. For a late 4th c. example of this, see below, § 9 (notes). For 6th c. examples, see F. R. Trombley, 'War and society in rural Syria', 172, 207.

³¹ MS. *صه*, 'built'. Read *صهه*, 'plundered' (cf. § 48), or *صهه*, 'took possession of'.

³² After a defeat in 297, Caesar Galerius returned next year with a large army and defeated the Sasanid king Narsai (293-303), who ceded the seven Transjordanian satrapies to Rome, including Nisibis. These events are reported in Peter the Patrician, *Fragments* 13 and 14, *HGM* I 431-434. R. C. Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy. Formation and Conduct from Diocletian to Anastasius* (Leeds, 1992), 5-7. For chronology: T. D. Barnes, 'Imperial campaigns, A.D. 285-311', *Phoenix* 30 (1976), 182-186, who suggests that the treaty was concluded in the winter of 298/9 or spring of 299. He considers the terms of the treaty given in Fr. 14 to be only 'fragments' of a longer list. Cf. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, 210f., 216-218, etc.

³³ This supposed article in the treaty of 363 is nowhere else attested and is of doubtful historicity. It appears instead to be a late 5th c. pretext to avoid paying subsidies popularly seen as 'tribute', but the time and place of its invention are difficult to identify. Cf. Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 25.7.11, where the sole condition attached to the handover is that 'Nisibis and Singara should pass into Persian hands without their inhabitants' (*ut Nisibis et Singara sine incolis transirent in iura Persarum*). The population of Nisibis was transferred to Mesopotamia to recolonise Amid, which Sasanid king Shapur II had taken by assault in 359. M. M. Mango, 'Nisibis', *ODB*, 1488.

³⁴ There is no record of even one embassy in 483 or thereafter being sent to remind the Sasanid kings Peroz (459 to early 484) or Balash (484-488), the latter of whom enjoyed friendly relations with the empire, of their alleged obligation to retrocede Nisibis. But, if such a clause had existed in the treaty of 363, Zeno might well have avoided raising the issue in order not to exacerbate the difficulties his ally Balash was having with the magi and Iranian nobility. Cf. below, §§ 18-19.

with the choice being made by the partner in need.³⁵ Now the Romans, who had help from God, the Lord of all, had no need of help from the Persians, for the emperors who reigned from that time until the present were believers, and their authority held firm by the help of heaven.³⁶ The Persian kings, however, would send ambassadors to collect gold for their needs, but this payment was not made as tribute, as many supposed it to be.

In our own time the Persian king Peroz received gold on many [occasions] from the Romans for his wars against the Chionites,³⁷ i.e. the Huns.³⁸ This was not because he could levy tribute (on the Romans), but because he could provoke them (to pay), on the grounds that [243] it was on their behalf that he was fighting his battles.³⁹ '(Support me) so that (the Huns) may not cross over into your

³⁵ It is not immediately clear that this agreement was a clause in the treaty of 299, even if Peter the Patrician's list of the terms is incomplete. Cf. R. C. Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy*, 6f. The story more probably belongs to the 5th c., before the reign of Peroz (459-early 484). Cf. Bury, *LRE* II 1-10. The *stater* in question (< Pahlavi *ster*), the Sasanid tetradrachm, was a multiple variant of the *dirham*, the basic Sasanid silver currency. Cf. below, § 10 n. 45.

³⁶ This refers not to the 5th c. emperors' opinions and policies on Christology, which were quite diverse, but to the Christian emperors *qua* Christian, and the perceived consequences in 363 of Julian's adhesion to Hellenic religion, viz. his death during the Roman retreat from Sasanid Mesopotamia and the loss of Nisibis and Singara.

³⁷ حشون. Wright (after Nöldeke): probably read حشون or حشون, 'Kushanaye'. Nöldeke, 'Wright's edition', 685-6, subsequently regarded this emendation as uncertain, noting that 'Roman subjects of both western tongues [in particular Ammianus 16.9.4 and 17.5.1] and eastern tongues [in particular ps.-Joshua] had only very confused ideas about these distant barbarians'. Ps.-Joshua is probably here simply referring to the Hephthalites. Cf. Luther, *Chronik*, 110.

³⁸ Peroz ruled from 459 to early 484. 'Perozes', *PLRE* II, 860. The Hephthalites preferred to receive tribute in Sasanid gold *dinars* (< Middle Persian *denar* < Latin *denarius aureus*). These demands led to the devaluation of the *dinar*, which fell from 7 g. under Bahram IV (388-399) to 3.5 g. under Peroz; but under his successors it rose again to 4.2 g. Ph. Gignoux, 'Dinar i. In pre-Islamic Persia', *Encyclopaedia Iranica* VII 412f.

³⁹ The monies were for the defence of Darband (in Arabic *Bab al-Abwab*), a fortress lying east of the Caspian Gates along the western shore of the Caspian Sea. The pass there is quite narrow, some 3 to 3.5 km. wide. The original long wall, made of mud-brick (c. 8 m. thick and 16 m. high), dates from the reign of Yazdgard II (438-457). The Armenians and Albanians wrecked the walls in the rebellion of 450, and a group of Huns led by a certain Ambazuk occupied Darband during the reign of Peroz. The massive fortifications there have a *terminus post quem* after 508. The 25 Middle Persian inscriptions have a late Sasanid style consistent with the reign of Khusrau I (13 Sept. 531 to Feb. 579). E. Kettenhofen, 'Darband', *Encyclopaedia Iranica* VII 13-19.

territory', he said, and the devastation and enslavement they had inflicted on the Romans in 707 (= 395/6 A.D.) was proof of his point: at the time of the emperors Honorius and Arcadius, the sons of Theodosius the Great, all Syria had fallen into their hands through the deceitful action of Rufinus the *hyparch* and the weakness of [Addai] the *stratelates*.⁴⁰

10 With the help of the gold he was getting from the Romans, Peroz subdued the Huns, seized many places within their territory, and added them to his kingdom before he was eventually taken prisoner.⁴¹ When the Roman emperor Zeno heard of this, he sent gold at his own expense, ransomed him, and made peace between them.⁴² Peroz then made a treaty with the Huns that he would not cross the border into their territory again to make war, but like Zedekiah he went back on his agreement, went to war, and like him was delivered into the hands of his enemies.⁴³ His entire army was routed and put to flight, and he himself captured alive.⁴⁴ Boastfully promising to pay for his life a

⁴⁰ The Hunnic raid came in 396. As *magister militum per Orientem* in 393-396, Addai was at Edessa to coordinate the defence of Oriens. He was criticised for not having conducted a mobile defence, instead keeping the troops of Oriens inside the fortifications of Edessa. The folk memory of these events was still alive during the Persian War of 502-506. *Euphemia and the Goth* 4, ed./tr. F. C. Burkitt (London-Oxford, 1913; repr. Amsterdam, 1981), 130f.; 'Addaeus', *PLRE* I 13. Cf. the detailed account of the raid in the entry for 706 (*sic*) in the Syriac *Chronicon Miscellaneum ad annum Domini 724 pertinens*, ed. E. W. Brooks, tr. J. B. Chabot, *CSCO* Script. Syri 4 (Louvain, 1904), 106. Flavius Rufinus was praetorian prefect of Oriens 392-395. After his death, all sorts of accusations were thrown at him, including extortion, judicial corruption, sale of offices and even treason. 'Flavius Rufinus 18', *PLRE* I, 778-781, esp. 780, with list of sources that elucidate ps.-Joshua's criticism.

⁴¹ Peroz seems to have received the monies c. 464 and to have destroyed the Transcaucasian Huns c. 468, in the reign of Leo I (457-474). Cf. Bury, *LRE* II 7f. and n. 5.

⁴² Zeno reigned from 9 February 474 to 9 April 491, including a brief period with coemperor Leo II in 474. Cf. 'Fl. Zenon 7', *PLRE* II 1200-1202. The story that emperor Zeno ransomed Peroz after his 'first' captivity is nowhere else attested. There may be something to it. Bury accepts the story, but A. Christensen rejects it as improbable. Bury, *LRE* II 10. *L'Iran sous les sassanides* (Copenhagen, 1944), 293, n. 4. Theophanes puts Peroz's captivity in 474/5. *Chron.* AM 5967 (Mango-Scott, 187).

⁴³ Cf. 1 Kings 24: 20-25:7; 2 Chronicles 36:11-17; Jeremiah 52: 1-11.

⁴⁴ Theophanes puts this in 474/5. He and Procopius, relying on the same source, give a different account. They tell of Peroz being cornered by the Hephthalites in a long valley with no exit, but of then making peace and escaping by a ruse. The magi are said to have advised him to make *proskynesis* in front of the *khagan* facing east at sunrise, feigning to give him honour, but in reality making obeisance to the rising sun (*viz.* the visible

ransom of thirty mule-loads of *drachmas*,⁴⁵ he sent the order for it back to his own realm but could hardly muster twenty loads, for by the previous wars he had completely emptied the royal treasury (inherited from) his predecessor. In place of the remaining ten loads he gave them his son Kawad as a pledge and hostage until he should deliver (the money), and for the second time he made a treaty with them that he would not make war again.

When he returned to his kingdom, he imposed a poll-tax upon his entire domain, sent the ten loads of *drachmas*, and redeemed his son, but he also gathered an army yet again and went to war.⁴⁶ There in fact the prophetic word found a fulfilment, the one which declares, 'I saw a wicked man uplifted like the trees of the forest, but when I passed by [244] he was not there, and when I sought him I did not find him'.⁴⁷ For when battle was joined and the troops were locked in combat, his whole army was destroyed, and when he was sought, he could not be found. To this day it is not known what became of him, whether he was buried under dead bodies, or threw himself into the sea, or hid in a cleft in the ground only to perish from hunger, or in a forest only to be devoured by wild animals.⁴⁸

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shape of the god Mithra). *Wars* 1.3.1-22 (Dewing I 12-21); Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5967 (Mango-Scott, 188). Ps.-Joshua's account is rich in pragmatic detail and more plausible. Peroz had to cede the frontier town Talakan to the Huns. *Pace* Christensen, ps.-Joshua does *not* say that Peroz spent two years in Hephthalite captivity. *L'Iran sous les sassanides*, 293 and n. 4.

⁴⁵ Lit.: 'coins'. Cf. Glossary, s.v. 'Drachma'. The basic Sasanid coinage was the *dirham*. The *dirham* (< Middle Persian *drahm* < Persian *derham* < Greek δραχμή) contained c. 4 g. in silver. Peroz is believed to have increased the production of *dirhams* to pay for the wars against the Hephthalites, and Kawad even more so because of his wars with the Roman Empire. The prices of basic commodities named in Pahlavi religious texts are invariably given in silver coinage. Ph. Gignoux, 'Dirham i. In Pre-Islamic Persia', *Encyclopaedia Iranica* VII 424-426. Plate XXIX a.-b.

⁴⁶ I.e. a capitation tax in coin based on a special census. It was apparently an extraordinary assessment that was later regularised. The existence of a capitation tax is mentioned at the time of Kawad's reforms late in his reign, but little is known of its prehistory in Peroz's time. Cf. Z. Rubin, 'The reforms of Khusro Anushirwan', in Cameron, *States, Resources*, 231f., 240, 243f.

⁴⁷ Psalm 37: 35-36.

⁴⁸ The battle took place in 484. In it, the Hephthalites destroyed the Sasanid cavalry when it was lured into riding over a camouflaged ditch. The search for Peroz's body was given up when none of the corpses yielded a large pearl that he had customarily worn on his right ear. Procopius, *Wars* 1.4 (Dewing I 20-31). Cf. Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5968 (Mango-Scott, 189f.), who mistakenly puts the battle in 475/6.

- 12 At the time of the said Peroz, the Roman empire was also in turmoil, for the palace officials hated the emperor Zeno because he was an Isaurian by birth.⁴⁹ Basiliscus rebelled and seized power, but Zeno subsequently prevailed and re-established his rule.⁵⁰ However, because he had experienced the hatred of many against him, he built for himself a secure [fortress] in his homeland as a place of refuge should some [evil] befall him.⁵¹ His [confidant] in this matter was the *stratelates* of Antioch, a man by the name of Illus.⁵² He also was an Isaurian, for (Zeno) gave positions of honour and power to all his compatriots and for this reason was all the more hated by the Romans.⁵³
- 13 When the fortress had been equipped with everything that was needed, and Illus had placed in it an immeasurably large amount of gold, he came to the capital to tell Zeno that his wishes had been fulfilled, but since Zeno knew that he was treacherous and longed to be emperor himself, he ordered one of the soldiers to kill him.⁵⁴ Although

⁴⁹ For source-based discussion on court politics between 474-488, see E. W. Brooks, 'The emperor Zenon and the Isaurians', *EHR* 30 (1893), 215-238. Cf. Bury, *LRE* I 389-402. 'Isaurians' were not so much a distinct ethnic group as simply mountaineers living around the city of Isaura. Their personal names are derived from Luwian, an Indo-European language whose dialects were once spoken in the Taurus mountains and Lycian plain. *SEG* 40, no. 1286 = W. D. Burgess, 'Isaurian names and the ethnic identity of the Isaurians in Late Antiquity', *Ancient World* 21 (1990), 109-121.

⁵⁰ Basiliscus reigned as a usurper 9 January 475 to late August 476. 'Basiliscus 2', *PLRE* II 212-214.

⁵¹ Cherris-Papyrios in the Isaurian Taurus mountains (present-day Tschandyr-Kalesi). The site had originally been called the 'hill of Papyrios' from the name of a son of the brigand Neon, who used it as a lair for raiding eastern Anatolia. John of Antioch, *Frag.* 206 (Mueller, *FHG* IV 616f. and notes). On Papyrios' fortifications, with plans and photos, see J. Gottwald, 'Die Kirche und das Schloss Paperon in Kilikisch-Armenien', *BZ* 36 (1936), 86-100, and see also below, n. 54.

⁵² Illus was consul in 478, *magister officiorum* and *patricius*, but not *magister militum per Orientem* until 481, several years after these events. Cf. 'Illus 1', *PLRE* II, 586-90. A peculiar feature of ps.-Joshua's nomenclature is his identification of military commands by the location of their headquarters, as here with Illus as '*stratelates* of Antioch'. He was in fact στρατηλάτης τῆς Ἀνατολῆς, that is *magister militum per Orientem*. Ps.-Joshua does the same with the forces commanded by the *duces* of the eastern provinces that fought in the Persian War of 502-506. His phraseology in these instances reflects common parlance and is devoid of any technical-administrative significance. Cf. below, nn. 436, 458, 494, 515.

⁵³ Brooks, 'Zenon and the Isaurians', 215f.

⁵⁴ Illus was an unreliable ally. In late 474 to late August 476, he sided with Basiliscus' rebellion against Zeno. Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5967 and 5969 (Mango-Scott, 187f. and nn.; 191f. and nn.). Later however, in 478/9, Illus cooperated with Zeno against the

(the soldier) commissioned [245] to do this sought an opportunity for many days to carry it out in secret, he could not find one. He did come across Illus inside the palace and drawing his sword raised it to strike him, but one of the soldiers attached to Illus instantly hit him in the arm with a dagger, so that the sword fell from his hand and (merely) clipped Illus' ear.⁵⁵ To conceal his plot against Illus, Zeno immediately ordered that the soldier be beheaded without appeal, but this only increased Illus' suspicion that Zeno had given the order for (his assassination).⁵⁶ He left and went down to Antioch, having resolved to take his vengeance when he should have the opportunity.⁵⁷

Since Zeno was afraid of Illus, aware as he was of his evil intentions,⁵⁸ he sent some notable men to Antioch with the message that (Illus) should go up to rejoin him as he wished to make an apology. He alleged that he was not responsible for the treacherous act and that he had no wish to kill him, but he could not soften Illus' firm resolve, for (Illus) despised him (for the attack) and had no intention of obeying the order to go to him. Eventually Zeno sent another *stratelates*, whose name was Leontius, with a force under his command, and ordered him to bring up (Illus) by force, or to kill him if he resisted.⁵⁹ When this man came to Antioch, he was seduced by Illus' gold into revealing the murderous order which he had been given, and when Illus saw that he had not hidden anything from him, he in turn showed him the large

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rebellion of Marcian. Ibid. AM 5971 (Mango-Scott, 195). The new fortress Cherris was doubtless intended to be more secure than Ourba (probably Olba) where Zeno took refuge during Basiliscus' insurgency; see above, n. 51.

⁵⁵ This was the third in a series of plots against Illus. It was instigated by empress Ariadne but this time with Zeno's tacit consent. The act occurred probably in 481, as Illus ascended the staircase linking the palace with the hippodrome. Urbicius, *praepositus sacri cubiculi*, handled the details of the attempted assassination. Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5972 (Mango-Scott, 196), where the translators give parallel sources (John Malalas and John of Nikiu).

⁵⁶ Theophanes omits this detail. The assassin was a certain Sporakios or Spanikios, one of the scholarian guards. Ibid.

⁵⁷ By the end of 481. Theophanes reports Illus' excuses for leaving court as feeling ill from his injury and needing a change of air. The latter began wearing a cap, perhaps to cover the scar of the wound. Ibid.

⁵⁸ This is difficult to reconcile with Illus' appointment as *magister militum per Orientem* in 481, with full authority to appoint *duces*. Cf. 'Leontius 17', *PLRE* II 670f.

⁵⁹ Theophanes erroneously reports that Leontius, *magister militum per Thraciam*, went to Antioch with Illus as a subordinate. *Chron.* AM 5972 (Mango-Scott 196, n. 6). Brooks, 'Zeno and the Isaurians', 224-226.

amount of gold he had <in> his possession, for which Zeno wanted to kill him. He persuaded Leontius to conspire and rebel with him, while pointing out the hatred felt by the Romans towards Zeno, and when (Leontius) had been persuaded, Illus felt able to reveal his plan. For (Illus) could not have [246] staged a revolt by himself nor personally have become emperor, since the Romans also hated him on account of his origin and his inflexible mind.

15 Leontius was proclaimed emperor in Antioch, but in reality it was Illus who was directing events.⁶⁰ Some even said that he was planning to kill Leontius if they defeated Zeno. However, among their followers there was a sorcerer, a false fellow named Pamprepius, and by his falsehood he caused all their schemes to collapse and backfire.⁶¹ To secure their hold on the empire, they sent ambassadors to the Persians, together with a large quantity of gold, to make an alliance of friendship with them, to the effect that if⁶² military assistance was needed, they would send it.⁶³ But when Zeno heard what had happened in Antioch, he despatched there a large force under one of his *stratelatai* named John.⁶⁴

16 When the adherents of Illus and Leontius heard that a large force was approaching, they took fright, while the population of Antioch, fearful that they could not survive a siege, clamoured for them to leave the city

⁶⁰ Leontius was crowned on 19 July 484 according to the astrologer Palchus. Verina Augusta (the widow of Leo I and a longstanding enemy of Zeno) performed the ceremony. It did not take place in Antioch as Joshua supposes, but at Tarsus in Cilicia. He probably confuses the coronation with Illus' formal entry into Antioch, whose date has been amended to 19 July 484. Verina subsequently sent rescripts to the people of Antioch and all provincial governors in the dioceses of Oriens and Aegyptus, asking all to recognise Leontius. Theophanes gives an abbreviated version of the text of this decree. He mistakenly dates most of these events in 481/2. *Chron.* AM 5973, 5974 and 5976 (Mango-Scott 197f. and n. 5; 198; 199f. and n. 2). Cf. Evagrius, *HE* 3.27 (Bidez-Parmentier 123f.), who names Eustathius of Epiphaneia as his source.

⁶¹ Cf. R. Asmus, 'Pamprepios, ein byzantinischer Gelehrter und Staatsmann des 5. Jahrhundert', *BZ* 22 (1913), 320-337. Pamprepius is called 'sorcerer' because of his knowledge of Neoplatonist theurgy. He was executed not long before the suppression of the rebellion because he had made 'false prophecies of success', perhaps by casting bogus horoscopes. John of Antioch, *Frag.* 214.10 (Mueller, *FHG* V 28). Bury, *LRE* I 398f. Cf. 'Pamprepius', *PLRE* II 825-828.

⁶² Wright: 'them <...> or if'.

⁶³ This event is otherwise unknown, and helps explain the relevance of Illus' rebellion to the theme of the background to Anastasius' Persian war.

⁶⁴ John the Scythian replaced Illus as *magister militum per Orientem* after the latter's rebellion. 'Ioannes Scythia 34', *PLRE* II, 602f.

and do battle (outside it), if they could. This greatly alarmed Illus' men, and they planned to abandon Antioch and cross over to the east bank of the Euphrates. (Illus) sent one of his own men, someone called Matronianus, with five hundred cavalry to establish an imperial seat for them at Edessa, but the Edessenes resisted him, closing the city gates, guarding the wall as is customary in war, and refusing him entrance.⁶⁵

When [247] Illus' men heard of this, they were forced to do battle with John, but this was beyond their means, for John hit them hard and destroyed the bulk of their army, and the remainder all scattered to their own home towns.⁶⁶ Being unable to resist the attack, (the conspirators) took the remnant of their force and fled to the secure and well-supplied fortress which I mentioned above.⁶⁷ John gave chase but he could not catch them, so he encamped [...] around the fortress, keeping them under guard. They allowed the force that was with them to go down, because they were relying on the (natural) security of the fortress, leaving only some chosen fighters with them. John vented his anger on those who came down from the fortress, but he could make no dent in the group around Illus. Added to the natural difficulty of access, the work of (human) hands had made the fortress amazingly secure, with only one possible way of ascent to it, and that was too narrow for even two people to go up together.⁶⁹ However, after a long period during

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⁶⁵ Ps.-Joshua relies on local tradition for this event, which is unattested elsewhere. Theophanes mentions an attempt to get control of Chalcis in Syria I which also seems to have failed. *Chron.* AM 5976 (Mango-Scott 199). Cf. Brooks, 'Zenon and the Isaurians', 227f. The geographical scope of the rebellion was tightly circumscribed right from the start.

⁶⁶ The battle seems to have been fought in the vicinity of Seleucia on the coast of Isauria. R. C. McCail, 'P. Gr. Vindob. 29788C: hexameter encomium on an un-named emperor', *JHS* 98 (1978), 54.

⁶⁷ See §§ 12-13. Cheris-Papyrios was a small site, and could not accommodate all Illus' partisans. The latter fled to any number of other fortresses, and even caves, in the mountainous terrain around Cheris. Illus is known to have controlled a number of such installations in Isauria as early as 477. The need to reduce these other sites, and the fact that the Isaurians were well practised in mountain warfare, explains the protracted fighting between 484-488. For example, Zeno's brother was liberated from a fortress somewhere in Isauria in 485. Brooks, 'Zenon and the Isaurians', 217f. and n. 50. The story of the siege of Cheris-Papyrios is told in detail by John of Antioch, *Frag.* 214.5-12 (*FHG* IV 620f.; V 27f.).

⁶⁸ One illegible word.

⁶⁹ Ps.-Joshua exaggerates somewhat. He is referring to a stairway cut into the side of the cliff below the site that passes through a vaulted tunnel for c. 25-30 metres. This piece of

which John used up all his ploys, some in Illus' group betrayed their fellows, and they were overpowered while asleep.⁷⁰ By Zeno's command both (Illus and Leontius) were put to death together with those who had betrayed them, and all those who were with them had their hands cut off.⁷¹ Such was the strife among the Romans in the time of Peroz.

18 After (Peroz) had been sought but not found, as I described above,⁷² his brother Balash reigned over the Persians in his place.⁷³ He was a gentle and peace-loving man, who found the Persian treasury empty [248] and the land ravaged by the Huns.⁷⁴ Doubtless it will not escape you in your wisdom how much loss and expense is incurred by kings in war, even in victory, let alone defeat. From the Romans he did not get the help that his brother had received. He sent envoys to Zeno with a request for gold, but because (Zeno) was anxious about the war with Illus and Leontius, and also because he was aware that the gold which had been sent by (the two of) them at the start of their rebellion⁷⁵ was still with the Persians, he had no intention of sending him anything except this message: 'The taxes of Nisibis which you are getting are enough for you. For many years they have been due to the Romans.'⁷⁶

19 Balash's soldiers despised him because he did not have the money to support them, and the magi also hated him because he was annulling their laws and wanted to build municipal baths for bathing.⁷⁷ When

information is unique to ps.-Joshua. It enabled J. Gottwald to identify the site. Gottwald, 'Das Schloss Paperon', 92.

⁷⁰ Cherris-Papyrios fell in 488. An additional factor that caused delay in finishing the siege was the rebellion of Theodoric the Ostrogoth in Thrace in 486-488. Cf. P. Heather, *Goths and Romans 332-489* (Oxford, 1991), 304f.; Bury, *LRE* I 398, n. 4.

⁷¹ The successful siege was the object of a panegyric dedicated to Zeno. Its details are consistent with the physical setting of the site. McCail, 'P. Gr. Vindob. 29788C', 54-56.

⁷² See §11.

⁷³ Balash (also given as Valash) reigned 484 to 488. R. N. Frye, 'The political history of Iran under the Sasanians', *CHI* III/1, 149. Cf. 'Valas', *PLRE* II 1136.

⁷⁴ The Hephthalite Huns, as above §§ 9-10.

⁷⁵ See §15.

⁷⁶ Ps.-Joshua's supposition that Nisibis should have been retroceded to the Roman Empire in 483 may be a misconception based on statements like this one. See § 7. On the other hand, it cannot be entirely excluded that Zeno devised this claim during the critical years of the rebellions of Illus and Theodoric the Ostrogoth as a legalistic evasion to justify withholding the monies normally sent for the Caucasian defences.

⁷⁷ *The Vision of Arday Viraz*, a Sasanid religious text, considers the act of taking hot baths to be a sin. The Pahlavi *Denkard* 8.27.1 seems to have permitted this as long as

they saw that the military thought nothing of him, they seized him and put out his eyes, and raised up in his stead Kawad, the son of Peroz his brother.⁷⁸ We mentioned his name above⁷⁹ when he was given as a pledge to the Huns, and he it is who started the war with the Romans, because they did not give him gold.⁸⁰ He sent an envoy to the emperor with the gift of a large elephant so that he might send him gold, but before the envoy reached Syrian Antioch, Zeno died and was succeeded by Anastasius.⁸¹ When the Persian envoy told his master Kawad about the change in the Roman empire, he ordered him to go up with diligence and demand the customary gold, or say to the emperor (if it was not forthcoming) that he would declare war.

(Kawad) ought to have [expressed] words of salutation and felicitation to (Anastasius) and to have rejoiced with him at the inauguration [249] of the sovereignty recently granted him by God.⁸² Instead, by his threatening words he angered the faithful⁸³ emperor

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special precautions were taken to protect the purity of the fire, a representation of the divinity Ahura Mazda. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les sassanides*, 54-56, 296, n. 5.

⁷⁸ Kawad reigned 488 to 13 September 531. Cf. 'Cavades I', *PLRE* II 273f. Cf. below, §24.

⁷⁹ See §10.

⁸⁰ Kawad probably wished to consolidate Sasanid control of the parts round the Caspian Gates, Albania or Adurbadagan. The foundation of the major cities Bailaqan and Bardha'a along the course of the Cyrus and Araxes rivers is attributed to him. V. G. Lukonin, 'Political, social and administrative institutions, taxes and trade', *CHI* III/2, 683. At this time the locals were descendants of the Germano-Iranian Alans and particularly the Huns who had begun settling the area in the 5th c. Hereditary commanders in these provinces bore titles reflecting this demographic fact (Alanshah, etc.) C. Brunner, 'Geographical and administrative divisions: settlements and economy', *CHI* III/2, 765.

⁸¹ Anastasius reigned 11 April 491 to 10 July 518. Kawad needed the gold partly for an issue of *dinars* to mark his accession, and partly for his campaigns against the Huns near the Caspian Gates. Cf. above, § 9, n. 38; Gignoux, 'Dinar', *Encyclopaedia Iranica* VII 412f.

⁸² This was customary practice. Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy*, 88. Such greetings were certainly sent to Khusrau I after Kawad's death in 531, although the War of 527-531 was still in progress. The usual salutations would have been included in the 'many beguiling words most unbecoming to Roman ambassadors' spoken to Khusrau when the Roman envoys reached him. Procopius, *Wars* 1.22.2 (Dewing I 202f.). Cf. the dispatch of John son of Comentiolus to Khusrau I in 565 to announce the accession of Justin II. Menander Protector, Frag. 9 (Blockley, 97).

⁸³ In this context, the word *ṭāḥṭā*, 'faithful', has the sense of 'Christian' *vis-à-vis* the Zoroastrian faith of the Sasanid monarchy. It was part of imperial titulature. In no sense does it imply any strongly monophysite theological leanings, as Anastasius' position on

Anastasius, who despised him when he heard his arrogant pronouncements and learned of his evil ways. (These included) his restoration of the loathsome magian sect called Zardushtakan,⁸⁴ which teaches that women belong in common and everyone may have intercourse with whoever he pleases,⁸⁵ and his persecution of the Armenians under his rule because they would not worship fire.⁸⁶ (Anastasius) sent him no gold, but rather this message: 'Just like my predecessor Zeno, I will not send (any gold) until you return Nisibis to me. For the wars I have with barbarians are not insubstantial: with those called Germans,⁸⁷ those called Blemmyes,⁸⁸ and many others.⁸⁹ I shall

this did not become a matter of policy until later in his reign. Cf. above, Introduction, pp. xxvii-xxix, xli.

⁸⁴ Զարդուշտական, (read plural), 'of the Zardushtakane'.

⁸⁵ The Pahlavi *Denkard* identifies the progenitor of this doctrine as Zaradusht Khrosakan of Fasa, a teacher of the 3rd c. A.D. 'The fundamental idea behind Zaradusht's heresy was that women and property engender envy, anger, hatred, greed and needs which would not arise if they were held in common ... Women and property should be held in partnership like water, fire and pasture ...; nobody was allowed to have more than others; sharing was a religious duty.' P. Crone, 'Kavad's heresy and Mazdak's revolt', *Iran* 29 (1991), 24. Cf. Crone's critique of the scholarship as to how this system developed into Mazdakism in the reign of Kawad. *Ibid.*, 21-42, *passim*.

⁸⁶ Lazarus of Pharp's *History of the Armenians* treats Peroz's war against the local quasi-feudal, clan-based Armenian principalities (*naḫararut'iwns*) in great detail, but goes down only to c. 489. No historian continued his work in any detail. In consequence, little is known of the resistance to Kawad's measures, which began c. 491, to judge from the sequence of events given by ps.-Joshua. On Peroz and the Armenians, see C. Sanspeur (tr.), 'L'Arménie au temps de Peroz (Lazare de Pharpi, *Histoire des Arméniens*, III, 60-85. Traduction nouvelle et commentaires', *RÉA* N.S. 11 (1975-76), 83-172. On the *naḫarar* system, see Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian*, 88f., 183-371. There was, strictly speaking, no 'fire-worship' in Zoroastrianism. Zoroastrians did not worship fire as a divinity, but only revered it in temples as the image or representation of Ahura Mazda. The Greek, Syrian and Armenian Christian writers of the period have an imprecise understanding of this point. We owe this suggestion to Peter Clark. Apart from this, ps.-Joshua is accurate. Crone, 'Kavad's Heresy', 27 and 39, n. 152.

⁸⁷ It is uncertain who these 'Germans' were. Huns, referred to as 'Scythians' and 'Bulgars', invaded Illyricum in 493 and 499. Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicle* 31f., 108, 110. It is possible that their raiding parties included sizeable numbers of Transdanubian Germans. Ps.-Joshua is certainly not referring to the Vandals, because Anastasius continued the 'endless peace' with them that his predecessor Zeno had negotiated. Procopius, *Wars* 3.7.26-28; 3.8.14.

⁸⁸ The pagan Blemmyes of Nubia were probably a Hamitic-speaking people. They raided the southern *limes* of Aegyptus down to c. 452, when a hundred-year peace treaty was concluded with them. The Christian king of the Nobatae, Silko, finally destroyed their power c. 535, as we learn from an inscription at Talmis. The troubles reported by

not neglect the Roman troops in order to support yours.⁹⁰

When the Armenians under Kawad's rule heard that the Romans had not given him a favourable reply, they were emboldened to break down the fire-temples which had been built by the Persians in their land and kill the magi in their midst.⁹¹ Kawad despatched a *marzban*⁹² and an army to punish them and force them to worship fire again, but they joined battle with him and destroyed him and his army. They sent envoys to our emperor with the aim of becoming his subjects, but he did not want to accept them, lest he be thought to be provoking a war with the Persians.⁹³ Those who find fault with him for not having given the gold should therefore blame the one⁹⁴ who sought to gain by force what did not belong to him, for if he had sought it through conciliation and persuasion, he would have obtained it. However, like Pharaoh he hardened his resolve⁹⁵ and threatened war, while we rely on the justice of God to [250] punish him even more severely than (Pharaoh) on account of his foul laws, for he wanted to pervert the law of nature and destroy the way of the fear of God.

All the Qadishaye⁹⁶ who were under his rule also rebelled against

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ps.-Joshua (nowhere else attested) reflect a breach of the aforesaid treaty in the 490s. 'Blemmyes', *ODB*, 296f. R. Lipsius, 'Die griechische Inschrift des nubischen Königs Silko', *Hermes* 10 (1876), 129-144. 'Silko', *PLRE* IIIB, 1151f.

⁸⁹ Fighting was probably going on at this time in Tripolitania against the Mazices, former allies who raided the Roman cities there. The dates are uncertain. John of Antioch, *Frag.* 216 (Mueller, *FHG* IV 621). Cf. Jones, *LRE*, 652.

⁹⁰ As quoted here, Anastasius' words are not a *legalistic* claim to the retrocession of Nisibis, but point pragmatically to increased revenues that had accrued since 363 in Sasanid Arbayistan. The strident tone, including the demand for the return of Nisibis, was a consequence of Kawad's failure to extend the traditional honours to the new emperor and the persecution of the Armenian Christians. The *novelty* of Anastasius' demand was soon forgotten and apparently gave rise to the legal fiction that Nisibis' retrocession was guaranteed by the treaty of 363. Cf. §§ 7, 18 nn. 33, 76.

⁹¹ His predecessor Balash had agreed to let the Christian Armenians destroy the existing fire-temples.

⁹² *Marzbans* were generally military governors of frontier provinces. On the evidence for this office, see Ph. Gignoux, 'L'organisation administrative sasanide: le cas du *marzban*', *JSAI* 4 (1984), 1-29, esp. 23f.

⁹³ I.e. Anastasius declined to annex the parts of Persarmenia that were in rebellion against Kawad.

⁹⁴ *Viz.* Kawad.

⁹⁵ Ex. 8 : 15, 32, etc.

⁹⁶ Kawad settled these folk as colonists near Singara. Their ethnic identity is uncertain. It has been suggested that they were Kurds or perhaps Iranian mountaineers. Brunner,

him, seeking to enter Nisibis and establish one of their own as king in it; their assault against (the city) lasted for a considerable time. And the Tamuraye who live in Persian territory also rebelled against him when they saw that he was giving nothing to them. Their confidence rested on the high mountains where they lived, from which they would descend to rob and plunder the surrounding villages and merchants, both travelling and native, and then return back up. Even the free-born men of his kingdom hated him, because he permitted their wives to commit adultery,⁹⁷ while the Tayyaye⁹⁸ under him, when they saw the chaos prevailing in his kingdom, also launched as many marauding raids as they could through the whole territory of the Persians.⁹⁹

23 Yet another dispute also flared up among the Romans at this time, since, after Zeno died, the Isaurians wanted to install an emperor acceptable to themselves and thus rebelled against the emperor Anastasius. When Kawad heard this, he thought that the time had come to send his envoys (yet again) to the Romans, for he reckoned that they would be afraid and would send him the gold on account of the

'Geographical and administrative divisions', *CHI* III/2, 761f. They are mentioned by two other Syriac writers around this period. Isaac of Antioch maintains that they adhered neither to Christianity nor to the Persian state religion; cf. Nöldeke, 'Zwei Völker', 157-163. Narsai (ed. A. Mingana, *Narsai doctoris Syri homiliae et carmina primo edita* [Mosul, 1905], I, p. 116, lines 13-15, refers to 'the Qadishaye, relatives of the children of Hagar, who plundered the world even more than the Ishmaelites ... (and) the Tamuraye, who truly made Athur [Mosul], the metropolis of the realm, into a desolate place'. Ps.-Joshua mentions the Tamuraye immediately below as fellow rebels with the Qadishaye against Kawad, and in § 24 both peoples are reported as submitting to Kawad and joining the Persian army of invasion. The Tamuraye, presumably an Iranian mountain tribe, appear to be otherwise mentioned only by Zachariah of Mitylene, *H.E.* 7.6, as a people continuing to fight against Kawad even after the peace of 506; cf. Nöldeke, loc. cit. 158, n. 4. (The passage from Narsai [ed. 1905] was unknown to Nöldeke [1879] and was brought to our attention by S. Brock.)

⁹⁷ On this supposedly Mazdakite practice, see above, § 20, n. 85.

⁹⁸ تايي (Tayyaye), Arabs of the tribe of Tayy. The term covers the Lakhmids (see the following note); it was later extended to Arabs in general.

⁹⁹ The Arab rebellion belongs c. 488-499. The earliest Lakhmid king list is found in the work of the Muslim writer Hisham b. Muhammad ibn al-Kalbi (ob. 820 A.D.). There is a lacuna between the death of al-Mundhir II (ob. 489?) and the accession of Nu'man II (499-503). The gap has not been accounted for. If the period 489-499 was indeed an interregnum, al-Mundhir II's ex-clan and tribal clients, with no clear sense of loyalty, may have taken to raiding Sasanid territory along the middle Euphrates (viz. Arbāyistan and Asuristan). For chronology, see G. Rothstein, *Die Dynastie der Lakhmiden in al-Hira* (Berlin, 1899), 50f., 69f. Cf. *CHI* III/2, 748 (map).

rebellion of the Isaurians.¹⁰⁰ However the emperor Anastasius sent word to him, 'If you are asking for a loan, I will send it to you, but if (your request is made) by reason of the usual agreement,¹⁰¹ I will not neglect the Roman forces, who are involved in heavy battle with the Isaurians, in order to become a benefactor to the Persians.'¹⁰² Thus Kawad's intention was frustrated by this, for his plan did not succeed. The Isaurians were beaten, destroyed, and slaughtered, and all their cities torn down and burned. The nobles [251] of the Persians secretly plotted to kill Kawad because of his foul way of life and his perverse laws, but when this became known to him, he abandoned his kingdom and took refuge among the Huns with the king with whom he had grown up when he was a hostage.¹⁰³

His brother Zamashp replaced him as king over the Persians, while Kawad took as a wife among the Huns the daughter of his sister.¹⁰⁴ This sister had been carried off captive there in the war in which his father (Peroz) was killed,¹⁰⁵ and because she was the daughter of a king, she became a wife of the king of the Huns, who had a daughter by her. When Kawad fled there, she gave (this daughter) to him as a wife, and making bold from this family connection to the king, he would constantly <press>¹⁰⁶ him for an army to help him go and kill the

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¹⁰⁰ The war with the Isaurian insurgents broke out because Anastasius succeeded to the throne (11 April 491) instead of Longinus, Zeno the Isaurian's brother. The conflict lasted until 498. Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicle* 30-32, 107-110. Cf. Brooks, 'Zenon and the Isaurians', 231-237.

¹⁰¹ I.e. the agreement described in § 8.

¹⁰² Theophanes' source corroborates Anastasius' offer of a loan at *Chron.* AM 5996 (Mango-Scott, 223f.) (with the wrong date). Procopius reverses the story at *Wars* 1.7.1-2, with Kawad *asking* for the loan. The consensus of the chroniclers is decisive against the latter.

¹⁰³ Cf. above, § 10; below, § 24 and nn.

¹⁰⁴ Procopius gives various details about Kawad's escape from the Prison of Oblivion and departure for land of the Hephthalites with the help of his first *Persian* wife. Kawad took this second *Hephthalite* wife after his escape. Procopius, *Wars* 1.6.1-11. Zamashp (496-498) was technically a usurper and is thus not in the Sasanid king list. Theophanes' account at *Chron.* AM 5968 (de Boor I 123; Mango-Scott, 190f.) is mistakenly dated to 475/6 (*sic*). This, and the last part of his report, with the story about Kawad's *second* Hephthalite wife (de Boor I 123f.), belong to 496-498, Kawad's second stay with the Hephthalites, during the interregnum under Zamashp (496-498). The report, which comes from the same source as Procopius, *Wars* 1.5.1-9 and 6.1-19, is condensed to the point of mutilation. Both writers confuse Balash (*sic*) with Zamashp. Cf. above, § 19.

¹⁰⁵ See § 11.

¹⁰⁶ MS. 𐭪𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥, read 𐭪𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥 (Chabot).

nobles and re-establish himself in his kingdom. As he requested, he was given a substantial army by his father-in-law, and he made his way to Persian territory. His brother fled when he heard of it, and (Kawad) accomplished his purpose and killed the nobles.¹⁰⁷ He sent a threatening message to the Tamuraye that if they did not submit to him voluntarily they would be subjected by force, but if they joined his army they could invade Roman territory with him, and he would distribute to them from the booty everything of which they had been deprived. They yielded to him out of fear of the Hun army, as did the Qadishaye besieging Nisibis when they heard this. The Tayyaye rallied to him with great enthusiasm when they learned that he was going to make war on the Romans,¹⁰⁸ but the Armenians [252] had no desire to obey him, fearing he would take vengeance on them for having previously torn down the fire-temples.¹⁰⁹ He assembled a force and attacked them, but although he was the stronger, he did not destroy them, but promised not to force them to worship fire if they would be allies to him in the war against the Romans. They unwillingly agreed to this out of fear.

I shall go on to show you in their proper place the things which Kawad did after crossing the Roman border,¹¹⁰ but because you also commanded me to describe in their proper place the signs and [punishments] which occurred, and to tell you about the locusts, plague, and scarcity, and because these preceded (Kawad's invasion), I shall now direct my account towards them. In order that the narrative may not become confused, I shall set down the years separately one after another and describe what happened in each one of them by itself. May God be my aid, with the help of the prayers of you his elect.

¹⁰⁷ Ps.-Joshua telescopes these events, which took place between 496 to 498/9. Procopius gives a fuller account at *Wars* 1.6.12-19.

¹⁰⁸ It is possible that Nu'man II engineered this not long after becoming king of the Lakhmids. This is consistent with Hisham's list of the Lakhmid kings, which assigns Nu'man a four-year reign (499-503), and the detail that ps.-Joshua supplies here that the Lakhmids returned to the allegiance of the Sasanid king on the eve of the Persian War of 502-506. Cf. Rothstein, *Lakhmiden in al-Hira*, 70.

¹⁰⁹ On the rebellions of the Tamuraye, Qadishaye, Tayyaye, and Armenians, see §§ 21-22.

¹¹⁰ The account of Kawad's invasion begins at § 48. Formally the present paragraph may be taken as an epilogue to §§ 7-24 (Pre-history of the War), and the following one as a prologue to §§ 25-46a (Chronicle of Edessa), but the contents of the two overlap.

The year 806 of Alexander (= 494/5 A.D.)

Father (Sergius), I believe I have now told you enough about the cause of the war and how it was provoked, even although in order to avoid a lengthy account I have made these narratives brief. I found some of (the information) in old books, some of it I learnt about from meeting men who had been on embassies with the two sovereigns, and other things (I discovered) from those who had been present at the events.¹¹¹ But now I wish [253] to tell you about the things which happened to us, for in this year there began the (series of) heavy punishments and signs which occurred in our time.

Our whole country¹¹² was encompassed with health at this time, but the diseases and sicknesses of our souls were numerous. Since God wills that sinners should repent of their sins and be saved, he made our body like a mirror and completely filled it with sores, so that by our outside we might see what our inside was like, and by the marks on our bodies we might learn how foul were the marks on our soul. As all the people had sinned, they all fell victim to this disease. Swellings and tumours appeared on all our citizens, and the faces of many became puffed up and filled with pus, making a fearful sight. Some had sores or pustules over their whole body, even to the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet, while others had great fissures on every single limb. But by the grace of God which protected them, the disease did

¹¹¹ Reference to one's sources of information is a standard *topos* in the prooemia of classicising historians, going back to Thucydides; cf. above, pp. xiv-xv. On autopsy, oral informants, and written texts as sources for late antique historians, cf. Dostalova, 'Profanhistoriker', pp. 175-178 and the table on pp. 158-159. Ps.-Joshua omits any reference to 'new books'. At first sight, this seems to exclude any use of the historical work of Eustathius of Epiphaneia, which carried events down to the siege of Amid in 503: 'The learned chronicler Eustathius composed [a history] about the war; he died straightaway, without having arranged for its publication to the end.' John Malalas, *Chronographia*, 399, lines 3-5. Malalas used his work and Evagrius cites it six times in Books II-III, but there is no distinctive correspondence between ps.-Joshua's reports and the surviving fragments of Eustathius' work. Cf. Evagrius, *HE* 1.19 and 3.37 (Bidez-Parmentier, 28, lines 12-16; 135f., lines 1-7). But from comparison of ps.-Joshua's account of Illus' rebellion (above, §§ 13-17) with Evagrius, *HE* 3.27 (Bidez-Parmentier, 123f.), it seems quite clear that Evagrius is summarising a longer account by Eustathius that had a content similar to ps.-Joshua's. For texts, see *HGM* I 353-363 (= *FHG* IV 138-142). See 'Eustathius of Epiphaneia 10', *PLRE* II 435f. A 'new book' ps.-Joshua could have used was a work by the physician James of Batnan on the famine of 500-502. It was in circulation by 502/3. Ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 7.2 (Hamilton-Brooks, 151).

¹¹² Martin and Wright emend to 'body' (جسد for MS. جسد).

not last long with anyone, and no damage or injury was done to the body. [Although] the marks of the afflictions were (still) evident after they were restored to health, the necessary bodily functioning of the limbs was preserved. At this time¹¹³ in Edessa thirty *modii*¹¹⁴ of wheat were being sold for a *denarius*,¹¹⁵ as were fifty of barley.¹¹⁶

The year 807 (= 495/6 A.D.)

27 On the seventeenth of May this year, when good gifts were liberally bestowed by heaven upon all, the crops [254] were plentiful by the bounty (of heaven), the rain came down, and the fruits of the earth grew in season, the bulk of the citizens cut off hope of salvation to go sinning in public. Revelling in their delights, they gave no thanks to God for his gifts, but were negligent in [thanksgiving] and succumbed to the pestilence of sin. As even the hidden and open sins in which they were engrossed did not satisfy them, they got ready on this specified date, which was a Friday night,¹¹⁷ when a dancer was dancing,¹¹⁸ and (this) <lasted>¹¹⁹ a period of three days.¹²⁰ They lit countless candles in

¹¹³ The prices of wheat and barley given here were more or less the standard rates for times of plenty in Osrhoene. Ps.-Joshua lists them here as a benchmark against which the high prices of the famine and war years can be measured. Cf. below, §§ 38, 39, 44-46, 87.

¹¹⁴ The *modius castrensis* equalled 40 Roman 'heavy' pounds (*librae*) in wheat. E. Schilbach, *Byzantinische Metrologie* (Munich, 1970), 77. Cf. A. Oxe, 'Kor und Kab. Antike Hohlmasse und Gewichte in neuer Beleuchtung', *Bonner Jahrbuch* 147 (1942), 167ff.

¹¹⁵ I.e. *denarius* [*aureus*], the Syriac term for the Late Roman gold currency, the *solidus*. The rate of 30 *modii* to the *solidus* is very cheap, suggesting an optimal yield in the late spring harvest of 495. Jones, *LRE*, 445f.

¹¹⁶ Barley was used generally for fodder and cheap bread, and is attested as a staple food in greater Mesopotamia since the 3rd c. A.D. F. M. Heichelheim, 'Roman Syria', *An Economic Survey of the Ancient World*, ed. T. Frank, IV (Baltimore, 1938), 129. The Edessan figures agree roughly with those from Egypt, where barley normally sold at half the price of wheat. Because of different soil conditions and agricultural priorities in Osrhoene, however, such comparisons have a limited value. Cf. R. S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, 1993), 25. For the role of barley in ancient and modern crop yields, see P. Gamsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World: Responses to Crisis and Risk* (Cambridge, 1988), 10-13, 24f., 32, etc.

¹¹⁷ The day of the week is correct. Ginzel, *Handbuch der Chronologie*, 129-131.

¹¹⁸ Cf. A. Karpozilos, 'Dance', *ODB*, 582.

¹¹⁹ Read? ܠܡܕܝܢܐ, 'and it lasted'. MS.: ܠܡܕܝܢܐ, 'and it was called'.

¹²⁰ ܠܡܕܝܢܐ, a word unattested in Syriac apart from this passage. The translation offered here derives it from Greek τριήμερία(-ν) or τριήμερον, 'a period of three days'. It is

celebration of this festival, a procedure without precedent in the city, and arranged them on the ground along the bank of the river¹²¹ from the Gate of the Theatre and as far as the Gate of the Arches.¹²² The burning candles were placed on the ground along the riverbank and hung up in colonnades, the open market-space,¹²³ the High Street,¹²⁴ and many (other) places. Because of this wicked deed, God performed a miraculous sign as a warning to them. The symbol of the Cross held by the statue of the blessed emperor Constantine moved away about a cubit from the statue's hand and stayed like this during Friday and Saturday until the evening.¹²⁵ On Sunday it came back by itself close to its (proper) place, [255] and the statue grasped it in its hand just as it had previously held it. By this sign the discerning recognised that the

possible that this rare Greek term was employed, rather than the normal Syriac expression for 'three days', in order to avoid any allusion to the New Testament's 'three days' (Mark 8 : 31, etc.), and instead to castigate the festival as 'Greek', and ps.-Joshua may have found a way of doing this by alluding to the Septuagint of Amos 4 : 4. In this connection, one might note that he employs one expression for candles when used at this festival, and another when used elsewhere (cf. Glossary, s.v. 'candle'). Wright made considerable emendations to the text and translated '<at the place> where the dancer who was named Trimerius was dancing'. The basis of his emendation is a reference to 'Trimerius a dancer' in a hymn of Severus of Antioch, cf. E. W. Brooks, *The Hymns of Severus*, PO 7 (1911), 717. On this May festival (for which see also §§ 30, 33, 46), and its connections with the Brytae and the Maiuma, cf. the Introduction, pp. xvi-xvii and the literature cited there. If this festival is indeed the Edessene version of the Maiuma and A. Büchler, 'Une localité énigmatique', *Revue des Études Juives* 42 (1901), 126, was correct in arguing that the Midrash connected the voluptuous feast of Amos 6 : 1-7 with the Maiuma, an allusion by ps.-Joshua to Amos 4 : 4 seems quite possible.

¹²¹ The laying of candles 'along the riverbank' is the only possible indication in this text of an aquatic element to the festival, which appears to have been a prominent feature of the Maiuma and the Brytae.

¹²² ܡܚܝܬܐ, uncertain ('vaults' or 'arches'). On the gates of Edessa and their names, see Map IV; Segal, *Edessa*, 185 and Plan I; and Luther, *Chronik*, 153-156. The Gate of the Theatre, mentioned only by ps.-Joshua, was presumably in the east wall close to the point where the Daisan flowed out of the city; the Gate of the Arches was in the west wall near the entry of the river.

¹²³ ἀντίφορος (the open market place, or a closed market place distinct from the open forum). On this term see C. Mango, 'The Life of St. Andrew the Fool reconsidered', *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slave* II, Miscellanea A. Pertusi II (Bologna, 1982), 304, reprinted in *Byzantium and its Image* (London, 1984), chap. VIII. The Edessene *antiphoros* was rebuilt by Justinian following the flood of 520: Procopius, *De Aedificiis* 2.7.6.

¹²⁴ ܡܚܠܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ, uncertain; possibly 'market place'.

¹²⁵ Levitation stories are unusual in early Christian teratology.

rite which had been celebrated was far removed from the will of God.

The year 808 (= 496/7 A.D.)

28 This sign from above was not enough to hold us back from wrongdoing.¹²⁶ Indeed, we became even more presumptuous and readily applied ourselves to sinning. Commoners slandered their neighbours, nobles became utter sycophants. Envy and deceit held sway over all of us, adultery and immorality multiplied. The disease of tumours took a firmer hold on the population, and many in the city itself and in the (outlying) villages lost their eyesight.¹²⁷ The bishop, Mar Cyrus, was possessed of a proper zeal, so he urged the citizens to make a silver litter as a mark of reverence for the eucharistic vessels in which they could be placed when being taken for the service at a martyr's commemoration.¹²⁸ Everyone gave what he could, but Eutychianus, the husband of [Aurelia],¹²⁹ was the first to show his generosity and gave a hundred *denarii* from his own account.

29 Anastasius the governor was relieved and Alexander replaced him at the end of this year.¹³⁰ He cleared the mess out of the city's streets and got rid of the stalls which had been constructed by tradesmen in the colonnades and streets.¹³¹ He also put a wooden box¹³² in front of his

¹²⁶ Of other 'signs', the complete solar eclipse seen in Constantinople and Illyricum on 18 April 497 was not visible in Osrhoene. Cf. Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicle* 31, 109.

¹²⁷ The Syriac ܩܠܒܐ can mean 'swellings in the groin'. This differs from John of Ephesus' usage, who calls it ܩܠܒܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ, 'the disease of the abscesses'. 'Paul the Anchorite', *Lives of the Eastern Saints* 6 (Brooks, *PO* 17, 118, line 8). At first sight, the disease may have been an early, less lethal variant of the bubonic plague. Blindness is not, however, associated with its 'classical' symptomatology, but only bloody and swollen eyes. Bubonic plague was first identified by the physician Rufus of Ephesus (2nd c. A.D.). R. Sallares, *The Ecology of the Ancient Greek World* (London, 1991), 266f., 466f. nn. 375f. See also: T. L. Bratton, 'The Identity of the Plague of Justinian', *Transactions and Studies of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia*, Series 5, 3 (1981), 113-124, 174-180 (*non vidimus*); P. Allen, 'The "Justinianic" plague', *Byzantion* 49 (1979), 7. Cf. below, § 44, n. 221.

¹²⁸ Cyrus, archbishop of Edessa and metropolitan of Osrhoene, 471-498 A.D. On the 'litter', cf. S. Brock, 'Some aspects of Greek words in Syriac', 106-108.

¹²⁹ The name is illegible and uncertain.

¹³⁰ Anastasius was *praeses Osrhoenae* in 496-497, Alexander in 497-498. 'Alexander 14', and 'Anastasius 5', *PLRE* II 57, 80.

¹³¹ The unauthorised construction of makeshift shops by tradesmen in the colonnades of the principal urban thoroughfares (the *cardo* and *decumanus*) was a constant problem. Ps.-Joshua is one of the first sources to mention it. By the late 6th c., all regulation ceased and the problem became endemic. Some commentators see in this the end of the

praitorion and made a hole in its lid, and wrote above it that anyone wishing to make something known, which he could not (do) easily in public, should put it in writing and drop it inside (the box) without fear. On this account he learnt many things, for [256] many people wrote (notes) and put them in it. Every Friday without fail he would sit in the *martyrion* of Mar John the Baptist and Mar Addai the Apostle and settle lawsuits free of charge.¹³³ [The oppressed] stood up against their oppressors, the swindled against their swindlers; they brought their cases before him, and he gave judgement. Uninvestigated cases going back more than fifty years were brought before him and settled.¹³⁴ He built the walkway by the Gate of the Arches and also began the construction of the *demosion* planned years earlier for erection beside

'Greek' city and beginning of the 'oriental' one, e.g. H. Kennedy, 'From *polis* to *madina*: urban change in late antique and early Islamic Syria', *Past and Present* 106 (1985), 4f., etc.

¹³² , from the Greek κιβωτός or its diminutive κιβώτιον.

¹³³ The church of John the Baptist was built in the archiepiscopate of Nonnus (457-471 A.D.). *Chron. Edessenum*, anno 769 (Guidi, 7) (version). The double name that ps.-Joshua gives it reflects the fact that Mar Addai, although not the principal martyr, had a shrine of his own in the church, perhaps in one of its apses. Addai was the legendary apostle allegedly sent by Jesus to king Abgar, but it is doubtful whether anyone built a church in Edessa in the first century A.D. On the legend of Abgar and Addai, cf. the references above, n. 22. The church seems to have been near the Roman law courts and Basilica in the southwestern quadrant of the city. Map IV and Segal, *Edessa*, Plan I.

¹³⁴ Alexander may have been reviving an old north Syrian custom in soliciting anonymous complaints and adjudicating them on Fridays without fees. It may have continued into the Islamic period at Aleppo. Although it seems at first sight improbable, the Mongols displayed an identical custom that was possibly acquired from the locals during their occupation of Syria in 1258-1260 A.D. A *mamluk* of the Ayyubid *amir* reports: 'When Hulegu camped before Aleppo ... I sought [his] camp. It was part of the justice of the Mongols that when they made camp in any place, they set up a pole near the king's encampment. From the top of the pole a small box was hung with a string, and around the pole was a guard of the most trusted Mongols. If a man had a complaint or had suffered an injustice, he would write his grievance in a petition, seal it, and place it in this box. When Friday came, the king would have the box brought to him and would open it with a key and thus discover the injustices suffered by people.' Chronicle of Qirtay al-'Izzi Khaznadari (ob. 1333 A.D.), from G. Levi Della Vida, *Orientalia*, N.S., 4 (1935), 358-366, in B. Lewis (tr.), *Islam from the Prophet Muhammad to the Capture of Constantinople I* (Oxford, 1974), 89f. The proof of the argument hinges on whether the *mamluk* mistook an Aleppine custom for a Mongol one, and whether all plaintiffs, whether Arab or Mongol, enjoyed access to the box.

the corn store.¹³⁵ He also ordered tradesmen to hang up crosses with five burning torches over their stalls on a Saturday evening.¹³⁶

The year 809 (= 497/8 A.D.)

30 While this was going on, the time came round again for the festival at which the pagan myths were chanted,¹³⁷ and (this year) the citizens took even more care over it than usual. For seven days before it they were going up in a crowd from the theatre in the evening, dressed in linen tunics.¹³⁸ (Their heads) were covered by turbans (*phakiolia*¹³⁹), their loins free, candles burning in front of them. For the whole night they burnt incense and held vigils, walking all round the city and praising the dancer until morning, with singing, shouting, and riotous behaviour.¹⁴⁰ On this account they also gave up going to prayer, and no one took any notice of what was proper, but in their arrogance they

¹³⁵ ⲙⲉⲛⲓⲁⲓ ⲙⲉⲛⲓⲁⲓ, uncertain; ⲙⲉⲛⲓⲁⲓ is from the Greek σιτικόν. In this instance, the planned δημόσιον (lit. 'public building') was a bath-house. Capizzi, *L'imperatore Anastasio*, 225.

¹³⁶ At first sight, the meaning of the regulation is unclear, and something seems to be missing from ps.-Joshua's summary. Unless meant as a form of public piety, it may have been intended to distinguish Christian shops from those operated by Jews. Jews were exempt from all forms of public and private business on the Sabbath. *Cod. Theod.* 16.8.20 (Ravenna, 26 July 412). Cf. *Cod. Iust.* 1.9.2, which may go back to Constantine the Great. On this see A. Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation* (Jerusalem, 1987), 262-267, 367f.

¹³⁷ Cf. §§ 27, 33, 46.

¹³⁸ The wearing of linen, a durable product of the flax plant, was a feature of pagan Greek sacrificial ritual. No sacrifice, particularly an oracular one, could be performed in a precinct contaminated with animal products like leather and wool. Donning linen on days when pre-Christian calendar customs were celebrated put the wearer under *prima facie* suspicion of violating the increasingly restrictive imperial laws against public and private sacrifice. Practitioners of sacrifice are attested in the Syrian provinces in the *territoria* of Antioch, Baalbek and Edessa in the mid- and later 6th c. Trombley, *HRC* I 6-35, 72-94; II 134-173, etc.; idem, 'Religious transition in sixth-century Syria', 163-66, 167-182, 193 and n. 183. A 'small tunic of linen' is mentioned as a festal garment by Severus of Antioch, *Homily* 95, pp. 93-94 [537-538], in his condemnation of a procession which occurred 'in pagan fashion' (ⲡⲁⲓⲁⲛⲁⲓ) at Daphne, which could well be a celebration of the Maiuma. Cf. Greatrex and Watt, 'One, two or three feasts?', sections (b) and (c: xviii).

¹³⁹ ⲡⲁⲓⲁⲛⲁⲓ, φακίδια, 'turbans'.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. § 27. Pagan incense offerings (*turificatio*) were banned in *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.12.2 (Constantinople, 8 November 392). Earlier condemnations of the Maiuma criticised public behaviour for its want of decorum and 'impudent licence'. *Cod. Theod.* 15.6.1-2 (Constantinople, 25 April 396 and 2 October 399). Trombley, *HRC* I 73.

ridiculed the restraint of their parents, saying, 'They did not know how to do it like us.' They said that [257] the city's inhabitants in earlier times were dunces and idiots, and thus they became arrogant in their wickedness. There was no one who would reprimand, reprove, or advise them, for although Xenaias, the bishop of Mabbug, happened to be in Edessa (at the time),¹⁴¹ and more than any others he is supposed to take on himself the labour of teaching, he did not speak with them about this matter for more than a day.¹⁴² However, God in his mercy openly revealed to them his concern for them, that they should be kept back from their evil-doing. Two *basilikai* and the <tepid bathing room>¹⁴³ of the summer *demotion* fell down, but by the grace of God no one was hurt right there, although there were many people working at it, both inside and outside, and none of them lost his life. Two men, however, were crushed to death at the door of the bathhouse while fleeing from the sound of the collapse and pulling (the door) back and forward on opposite sides to turn it. The stones fell on them and they died as they were wasting time on this argument as to who should get out first. All discerning people gave thanks to God for having spared the city a mass mourning, for this *demotion* had been due to be (open for) bathing in just a few days time. Even the foundation stones laid into the ground were uprooted from their places, so (violently) did it fall.

¹⁴¹ The writer otherwise known as Philoxenus, who was born in the second third of the 5th century, attended the School of the Persians in Edessa, was bishop of Mabbug from 485 to 519, and died in exile in 523. The monograph of A. de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog*, deals comprehensively with his life, writings, and theology; see pp. 9-12 for the two versions of his name, and pp. 30, n. 5, and 49, n. 6, for his visits to Edessa subsequent to his period as a student.

¹⁴² While it is arguable as to how strong a criticism this is of Philoxenus, there is no doubt that ps.-Joshua does not speak of him in the same warm tone as he uses for Flavian; cf. above, pp. xxvii-xxviii. It is conceivable that the remark is an oblique criticism of the *city* of which Philoxenus was bishop, namely Mabbug, rather than primarily of the man himself. The Maiuma probably originated in Syria west of the Euphrates, and ps.-Joshua may have been pointing the finger at Mabbug, the ancient cult centre of the Syrian goddess, as the place from which this 'wicked pagan festival' came to Edessa. Cf. Greatrex and Watt, 'One, two or three feasts?', n. 72. Cf. § 46 (and above, pp. xix-xx) for a case where the author demanded considerable perspicacity of his readers; this might be another such case.

¹⁴³ Uncertain, reading ܪܬܝܬܐ ܕܥܐ, MS. ܪܬܝܬܐ ܕܥܐ. Wright: perhaps ܪܬܝܬܐ ܕܥܐ, 'urinal', followed by Dolabani.

31 The edict of the emperor Anastasius arrived this year, remitting the gold which tradesmen paid every four years and freeing them from the tax.¹⁴⁴ This edict did not go only to Edessa, but to all cities of [258] the Roman domain. The Edessenes' four-year payment had been one hundred and forty pounds of gold, and the whole city rejoiced (at its remission).¹⁴⁵ They all dressed up in white, from the greatest to the least, and carrying lighted candles and burning censers, to the accompaniment of psalms and hymns, they went out to the *martyrion* of Mar Sergius and Mar Simon, thanking God and praising the emperor.¹⁴⁶ There they held a eucharist, and on coming back into the city they extended the feast of joy and pleasure for a whole week, and decreed that they would celebrate this feast every year. All the tradesmen sat

¹⁴⁴ The *chrysargyron* or *collatio lustralis*. The text of Anastasius' law is found at *Cod. Iust.* 11.1.1-2 (Krueger, 423). Originally a five-year tax, it was being collected every fourth year in the 5th c. M. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy* (Cambridge, 1985), 647. The tax caused much hardship and popular protest, not least because of the evident cynicism implied in its name, even when allowing for Libanius' theatrical remarks at *Or.* 46.22-23, where taxpayers are said to shudder with dread at the snarls and near bites of the revenue collectors (whose activities were under the supervision of the city councillors). Quoted by Jones, *LRE*, 871f. The *chrysargyron* was laid on *negotiatores* or *πραγματεύται*, anyone who earned his living by buying, selling or charging fees. Moneylenders and prostitutes were liable to pay, but physicians and teachers were specifically excluded. Agriculturalists and rural craftsmen were also exempted. *Negotiatores* were taxed on tools, animals, slaves and even family members involved in their business activities. Cf. Evagrius' extended account at *HE* 3.39 (Bidez-Parmentier, 136-139). For the provisions of the various enactments, cf. Jones, *LRE*, 431f., 1178f. (n. 52).

¹⁴⁵ This came to 10,080 *solidi* in coin, the only figure we have for the complete assessment of a Late Roman city. If Jones' guess is right that the tax often came to c. 1.5 *solidi* per person over four years, we can estimate the number of *negotiatores* in Edessa as some 6-7,000. Jones, *LRE*, 871f. Hendy, *Byzantine Monetary Economy*, 175f. In Egypt, where the *chrysargyron* was collected in monthly or annual instalments, bullion dealers were near the top of the scale, paying 0.57 *solidi per annum* or 2.28 *solidi* in a four-year period. Our figures for Edessa disagree with Bagnall's, who, in discussing this section of ps.-Joshua, applies this 'high' figure for goldsmiths to *negotiatores* in Edessa at large. The assessment of most *negotiatores* must have been far below that of the goldsmiths, and the average figure closer to Jones' 1.5 *solidi* than Bagnall's 2.28 *solidi*. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 153f. and n. 31.

¹⁴⁶ The *martyrion* was located outside the fortifications northeast of the city on the far side of the Daisan river. See Map IV and Segal, *Edessa*, Plan I.

around and had a good time, [bathing and] relaxing in the courtyard of the (City) Church and all the city's colonnades.¹⁴⁷

The bishop, Mar Cyrus, passed away this year on the fifth of June, and was replaced by Peter.¹⁴⁸ He added Palm Sunday to the (list of) yearly festivals,¹⁴⁹ established the practice of consecrating the water on the night preceding Epiphany, [. . .]¹⁵⁰ over the oil of anointing on Thursday (of Holy Week) in front of the whole people,¹⁵¹ (and so on) with the rest of the festivals. Alexander the governor was relieved and replaced by Demosthenes, who ordered all the colonnades of our city to be whitewashed.¹⁵² Those with much experience were greatly perturbed by this, saying it was a sign [which pointed]¹⁵³ to imminent things which would happen [in the land].¹⁵⁴

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¹⁴⁷ Apparently the Great Church, whose location is unknown. Segal puts it near the acropolis in the southwest quadrant of the fortifications. *Edessa*, Plan I. In time, it became associated with the cult of St. Thomas, whose *martyrion* received a casket for his relics (γλωσσόκομον) on 22 August 395. Cf. *Chron. Edessenum*, anno 705 (Guidi, 6) (version).

¹⁴⁸ Peter, archbishop of Edessa, 498-510 A.D.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Severus of Antioch, *Homily* 125, p. 248/249: 'For the day of this festival [Palm Sunday], although not (previously) celebrated by many, is now generally speaking celebrated by all men, and none of those who have imitated those who have celebrated it for some time now has rejected it as a new invention'.

¹⁵⁰ Martin: [ܡܬܥܝܢ], 'consecrated'; Wright: [ܡܬܥܝܢ], 'prayed', Dolabani: [ܡܬܥܝܢ], 'paschal (things)'.

¹⁵¹ These practices for Epiphany and Holy Week had been instituted not long before this by Peter the Fuller, patriarch of Antioch (d. 488); cf. Theodoros Anagnostes, *Kirchengeschichte*, ed. Hansen, 155.17-19.

¹⁵² The new governor served as *praeses Osrhoenae* in 498-501 A.D. He may be the same person as Fl. Theodoros Petrus Demosthenes, who achieved the consulship and rose in the civil service to become *praefectus praetorio Orientis* in 521-522 and 529. 'Demosthenes 3' and '4', *PLRE* II 353f. Colonnades were normally left with their natural marble or limestone surface exposed. It is possible that the measure was taken to cover the pillars whose stone had been damaged by cuttings and stains during the erection, use and removal of the shops set up there during the administration of the previous governor Alexander.

¹⁵³ MS. ܡܬܥܝܢ. Read? ܡܬܥܝܢ; Dolabani: ܡܬܥܝܢ, 'symbolising'.

¹⁵⁴ Martin and Wright: ܡܬܥܝܢ. Chabot: 'vox evanida, locus corruptus' ('word disappeared, passage corrupt').

The year 810 (= 498/9 A.D.)

33 [259] A demonstration of God's righteousness was manifested to us at this time, to make us cease our evil way of life.¹⁵⁵ In May of this year, on the day when that wicked pagan festival was to be celebrated,¹⁵⁶ a multitude of locusts came into our country from the south.¹⁵⁷ They did us no damage or harm this year, merely laying a substantial number of eggs in our country, but when the eggs had been laid in the ground, there were dreadful tremors in the earth. These clearly happened to arouse the people out of their sinful torpor, so that they might be spared the chastisement of famine and plague.

34 In August of this year the edict of the emperor Anastasius arrived <abolishing> animal combats¹⁵⁸ in the cities of the Roman empire.¹⁵⁹ Then in September there came a powerful quake, and a mighty sound from heaven was heard over the whole earth.¹⁶⁰ The earth was shaken to its foundations at this sound, and all villages and towns heard the sound and felt the quake. Bad news and distressing tidings came to us from all directions. Some said an amazing sign had been seen in the river Euphrates and the warm waters of Abarne, for the flow from their springs had stopped on that day.¹⁶¹ I would not assume this to be false, because frequently when the earth is torn by quakes, it happens that the waters flowing in the fissured places are held back from their (normal)

¹⁵⁵ The Chinese annals report the appearance of a comet sometime between 29 November and 28 December 498. Such a 'sign' would have been grist for ps.-Joshua's mill, but it goes unreported. It was first seen in the constellation of Leo in the west, moved to Cancer, and finally reached the Milky Way. We owe this suggestion to Prof. F. Richard Stephenson. Cf. Ho Peng Yoke, 'Ancient and mediaeval comets', 164. It should have been visible at Edessa's latitude. Cf. B. Croke, 'Comets', *ODB*, 486.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. §§ 27, 30, 46.

¹⁵⁷ The Syriac life of Rabban Bar-'Idta mentions a plague of locusts around Marga and Nineveh c. 591-595. It is said to have come up from the 'lower regions', suggesting a regular migration route from lower or central Mesopotamia. *The Histories of Rabban Hormizd the Persian and Rabban Bar-'Idta* 22 (Budge, 227f.).

¹⁵⁸  *σο, κυνήγιον*.

¹⁵⁹ Anastasius' edict was evidently little more than a recapitulation of the basic law found at *Cod. Theod.* 15.11.1 (414 A.D.). It was therefore not repeated at *Cod. Iust.* 11.35.1 (Krueger, 440).

¹⁶⁰ Cf. B. Croke, 'Earthquakes', *ODB*, 669f.

¹⁶¹ Abarne or Abarne (from the Iranian *Abgarne*, present-day Tchermik), a place of sulphurous hot springs lay 60 km. WNW. of Amid in Mesopotamia. A monastery existed there in the 6th c. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, 93, 110. Fig. XVII. Cf. *Chron. Edessenum*, anno 810 (Guidi, 8).

course and sometimes even diverted to another place. The blessed David [260] reveals that this occurs, when in the eighteenth Psalm he talks about the punishments which came from God upon his enemies by earthquake, rending of mountains, and other similar things, for he said: 'The springs of the seas were revealed, and the foundations of the earth laid bare at your rebuke, O Lord'.¹⁶² In this month there also came a letter, which was read to the whole church, (informing us) that the city of Nicopolis had fallen down suddenly in the middle of the night, burying all its inhabitants.¹⁶³ Some visitors who were there, and some brothers from our schools who were travelling that way and happened to be in its midst, were also buried there. Their companions who came (back alive) told us (about it). The entire wall encircling the city and everything inside it was flattened that night, and no one survived except the bishop of the city and two other men who were sleeping behind the apse of the altar of the church.¹⁶⁴ When the ceiling collapsed of the house in which they were sleeping, one end of the beams was held up by the wall of the altar, and so it did not bury them. This is what a certain truthful brother told me.¹⁶⁵ 'On the evening of the night when it fell down, a colleague and I were bedding down inside (the city), but he was agitated and said to me, "Come, let us go and spend the night outside the city in a cave as is our custom, because I cannot stay here since the air is too oppressive for me to get any sleep." So we rose, went outside the city, and stayed the night in a cave as is our custom. At dawn I woke up the brother with me and said to him, "Get up, for the dawn has come, and let us go into the city and do our business." We got up, went to the city, and discovered [261] all its buildings demolished and the people, domestic animals, oxen, and camels buried in it. The sound of their groaning emerged from deep inside the earth.

¹⁶² Psalm 18 : 15 (16). Cf. verse 7 (8).

¹⁶³ Luther, *Chronik*, 169f., suggests that the Nicopolis in question was the one in Armenia I because of known seismic activity there around this time, when an earthquake wrecked most of Neocaesarea (Pontus Polemoniacus), but left the church of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus standing. Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5995 (Mango-Scott, 223) gives 502/3 as the date, but a year or two should be subtracted from most of his entries in this part of his chronicle. Cf. 'Nikopolis', *PECS*, 626, where the town in Euphratesia is suggested. The site cannot possibly be Nicopolis-Emmaus in Palaestina I, as Wright suggests. *Chronicle of Joshua*, transl. p. 24.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. *Chron. Edessenum*, anno 810 (Guidi, 8) (version), where the gist is given of ps.-Joshua's report up to this point.

¹⁶⁵ The 'truthful brother' was a cave-dwelling hermit who lived outside Nicopolis.

Those who congregated there extricated the bishop from under the beams of the [church] by which he had been protected, and he sought bread and wine to celebrate the mysteries. Because the whole city had been flattened, nothing had survived in it, but a chance passer-by, a good man, gave him a little bread and wine. So he celebrated the eucharist and prayed, and gave to those who were there communion in the mystery of salvation. It seemed to me that at that moment he was like the righteous Lot as he fled from Sodom.¹⁶⁶ So much (for the brother's story).

35 Furthermore, up north there was a *martyrion* called Arsamosata, which had been strongly built and beautifully decorated.¹⁶⁷ Every year on the day on which occurred the commemoration of the saint<s> who <were> placed in it, a multitude would gather there from all around, some for prayer, others for business. Many supplies, in fact, were brought in for the people assembled in that company. When there was a great crowd there, of men, women, and children, and of all ages and ranks, terrifying lightning and violent thunder broke out, and the rumblings of a quake. All the people fled to the *martyrion* to take [262] refuge with the bones of the saints, but while they remained there in great fear and were praying and worshipping in the middle of the night, the *martyrion* collapsed and the majority of those inside were crushed beneath it.¹⁶⁸ This happened on the same day as the fall of Nicopolis.

The year 811 (= 499/500 A.D.)

36 None of us gave up his evil ways on account of all these quakes and disasters. Because our country and our city continued to have no excuse, since we, later on, were being reserved for chastisement, and because far-away news did not alarm us, an incurable blow struck us. Let us therefore acknowledge the righteousness of God and proclaim, 'The Lord is righteous and his judgements wholly upright',¹⁶⁹ for in his patience he still desired by signs and wonders to turn us back from our

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Genesis 19.

¹⁶⁷ In Sophene (later Armenia IV) south of the Arsianias river, a tributary of the Euphrates. The name of the town is here confused with that of the *confessor* buried in the church. Cf. C. Foss, 'Arsamosata', *ODB*, 186f.

¹⁶⁸ On the institutional origins of the Anatolian and Armenian martyr festival, see S. Vryonis, 'The *panegyris* of the Byzantine saint: a study in the nature of a medieval institution, its origins and fate', *Sobornost Supplement* 5 (1981), 196-226, esp. 209f.

¹⁶⁹ Psalm 119 : 137.

evil ways. On the twenty-third of October of this year, a Saturday,¹⁷⁰ the sun was dispossessed of its light at dawn and its optical disc became like silver. It was without its visible rays and our eyes could easily look at it without difficulty, for it had no brilliance, splendour, or radiance to prevent them gazing at it. It was as easy for us to look at it as it is to look at the moon, and it remained like this till towards the eighth hour, while the ground illumined by this feeble twilight resembled a covering of ashes or sulphur.¹⁷¹ On the same day another terrible and terrifying sign occurred, (this time) on the city wall, and (so) this (city), <which> on account of the faith of its king¹⁷² [263] and the righteousness of its inhabitants in former times had been considered worthy to receive a blessing from our Lord, came near to swallowing up its contemporary inhabitants because of the magnitude of their sins. A gap appeared in the wall on the south side towards the Great Gate, and some of the stones from (that) place were scattered a considerable distance from it. On the order of the bishop, our father Mar Peter, intercessions were made and everyone sought mercy from God. He took charge of all his clergy and the whole covenant (community),¹⁷³ men and women, and

¹⁷⁰ The day of the week is correct. Cf. Ginzel's tables, *Handbuch der Chronologie*, 129f.

¹⁷¹ Viz. the sky was covered with thin grey cloud or dust that admitted just enough light for the observer to see the disc of the sun. D. Schöve and A. Fletcher, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets AD 1-1000* (Suffolk, 1984), 84-86, 261. The ash precipitate suggests a volcanic eruption, great forest fire or dust storm. The duration of the phenomenon alone, eight hours, is a strong argument for its not having been a solar eclipse. Ibid., xxi-xxvi. Figs. 10-11. None is reported for October 499 anywhere near the Mediterranean or its hinterlands. Grumel, *Chronologie*, 460 (who uses the Martin edition of ps.-Joshua). Cf. the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius on 6 November 472, which showered burning cinders on Constantinople; dust is said to have accumulated on rooftops to a depth of several inches, and litanies were performed. Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5966 (Mango-Scott, 186f.). Debris from the eruption fell all over Europe. Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicle* 25, 99. Volcanic ash found in Iceland and dated to the 5th c. seems to have come from this event. Schöve-Fletcher, *Eclipses and Comets*, 321, 327. The eclipse seen at Seert in Sasanid Arbayistan on 2 June 500 ('in the tenth regnal year of Anastasius') cannot have been the same event as the one at Edessa. As the towns are c. 250 km. apart, total darkness ('totality') would not have affected both sites unless they both lay along the centre of the path of the eclipse. *Histoire Nestorienne (Chronique de Séert), seconde partie (I)* 10 (Scher, *PO* 7, 119). For a different view, see Luther, *Chronik*, 171. Cf. D. Pingree *et alii.*, 'Eclipses', *ODB*, 671f.

¹⁷² Abgar. Cf. above, § 5.

¹⁷³ ܡܢ ܕܡܢܐ. In addition to clergy and laity (and monks), early Syriac literature refers to people called 'children of the covenant' (*bnay qyama*). The exact contours of this group are still uncertain, but it was evidently characterised by an ascetic spirituality.

all the (lay) members of the church, both rich and poor, men, women, and children. They went through all the streets of the city, bearing crosses (and singing) psalms and hymns, (dressed) in the black garments of penitence, while all the monasteries in our country also kept up their services with great diligence. By the prayers of all the saints the light of the sun was restored to its place, and we received a little consolation.

37 In November we saw three signs in the midday sky. One of them, in the middle of the sky on the south, was coloured like a rainbow,¹⁷⁴ but it faced up (rather than down), that is, [its curvature] was downwards with its ends at the top. There was also one in the east and another in the west.¹⁷⁵ We also saw another sign in January, (this time) due south-west, which looked like a spear. Some people said it was a broom of destruction, others a spear of war.¹⁷⁶

Recent discussions of the institution include G. Nedungatt, 'The covenanters of the early Syriac-speaking church', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 39 (1973), 191-215, 419-444; M.-J. Pierre, *Aphraate le sage persan: exposés*, Sources chrétiennes 349 (Paris, 1988), 98-107, with bibliography 21-22; S. Abou Zayd, *Ihdayutha: A Study of the Life of Singleness in the Syrian Orient* (Oxford, 1993), 59-107; and S. H. Griffith, 'Monks, "Singles", and the "Sons of the Covenant"', in E. Carr *et al.*, *Eulogema: Studies in Honor of R. Taft* (Studia Anselmiana 110) (Rome, 1993), 141-160. Griffith highlights the problem of translating the term into a modern language, and paraphrases (p. 159): 'a group of people belonging to a certain "station in life" in the community that ... they assumed by "covenant" at Baptism.' Cf. also § 100.

¹⁷⁴ Literally: 'the bow that occurs in the clouds'.

¹⁷⁵ These 'signs' were evidently clouds or halo phenomena. On cloud divination, pagan and Christian, see: Trombley, *HRC* I 47f. and n. Cf. *Chron. Edessenum*, anno 810 (Guidi, 8) (version), with less detail.

¹⁷⁶ January 500. This was evidently a comet. Grumel, *Chronologie*, 470. There is a difficulty with the date. The Chinese annals report a comet on 13 February 501 whose great length may have given it the configuration of a 'spear': 'During the 11th month of the third year of Tung-Hun-Hou a (*chhang-hsing*) comet was seen stretching across the heavens.' Ho Peng Yoke, 'Ancient and mediaeval comets', 164. The compass direction of the Chinese comet is unfortunately not given, but it should have been visible at Edessa's latitude. If 13 February 501 is the correct date for ps.-Joshua's comet, it would have appeared in the midst of the famine at Edessa (*viz.* when more than 100 bodies per day were being carried from the city). Below, § 43. It is possible that ps.-Joshua put it a year and a month earlier because he preferred to remember it as a 'portent' rather than an accompanying circumstance of the famine. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the comet in question was not, on the whole, an important one. Cf. Schöve-Fletcher, *Eclipses and Comets*, 285, 291, where it is given an importance of 4 ('noted by some chroniclers') on a scale of 1 ('noted only by experienced sky-watchers') to 9 ('created terror; remembered for many generations'). Thus, the comet gets most of its importance

Up to this point we had been punished (merely) by (bad) news and signs, [264] but from here on who can describe the suffering which beset our country from all sides?¹⁷⁷ In March of this year the locusts came at us from out of the ground in such numbers that we imagined that not only the eggs in the ground¹⁷⁸ had hatched against us, but that as it were the air was belching them forth against us, and they were coming down from heaven upon us.¹⁷⁹ When they could (only) crawl, they devoured and laid waste the entire 'Arab'¹⁸⁰ and the territories of the people of Resh'aina, Tella, and Edessa, but when they could fly, their range was from the border of Assyria¹⁸¹ to the Mediterranean, and

from how ps.-Joshua interprets it. Great comets are frequently reported in the shape of spears, as for example the one that preceded the Muslim conquest of the Near East in 634: 'At this time something like the lance (*ar-rumh*) appeared in the sky [extending] from south to north. Then it extended from east to west. And it stayed in this manner for thirty-five nights.' *Chronique de Séert, seconde partie (II)* (Scher, *PO* 13, 580) (no month given). There is a clear correspondence between this and the description given of the same comet by the Japanese annals. It appeared twice in 634/5: 'During the eighth month of the sixth year of Jomei-tenno [29th August to 27th September approx.] a (*chhang-hsing*) comet was seen at the south. During the first month of the seventh year [24th January to 22nd February, approx.] the (*hui*) comet turned round and appeared at the E.' Ho Peng Yoke, 'Ancient and mediaeval comets', 168. It is considered to have been a more important comet ('noted by most chroniclers') than the one of 500/1. Schove-Fletcher, *Eclipses and Comets*, 285, 293.

¹⁷⁷ For what follows, cf. *Chron. Edessenum*, anno 811 (Guidi, 8) (version).

¹⁷⁸ Cf. above, § 33.

¹⁷⁹ Locust plagues were rare but destructive. The great locust plague of 125-124 B.C. in the *territoria* of Carthage and Utica in Africa is said to have cost 200,000 lives. Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply*, 25. There was a five-year locust plague, with drought, in Roman territory during the reign of Justin I (518-527). *Chronique de Séert, seconde partie (I)* 10, 18, 20 (Scher, *PO* 7, 119; 134; 140). The chronicle of Seert mentions its ravages only in Roman territory, as for example in Tur 'Abdin. *CHI* III/2, 748 (map). In the great locust plague of c. 591-595 around Marga and Nineveh in Sasanid Arbayistan, the locusts are said to have destroyed crops, plants, fruit trees, forest trees and every green herb. The insects also fouled springs, fountains and wells, evidently with their bloated bodies, thereby ruining water supplies. *Life of Rabban Bar-Idta* 22 (Budge, 227).

¹⁸⁰ 'Arab appears to be employed by this author specifically of the area around and to the east of Tella and Amid. Cf. §§ 50 and 90 and H. Pognon, *Inscriptions sémitiques de la Syrie, de la Mésopotamie et de la région de Mossoul* (Paris, 1907), pp. 34-35; Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, pp. 75-78 and Fig. X (whose 'Gamer 'Arab' is a misunderstanding of 'laid waste the 'Arab').

¹⁸¹ Probably Arbayistan, the Sasanid province adjoining the 'Arab. The locust plague thus seems not to have affected the *territoria* of the Persian towns like Bezabde, Nisibis, Peroz-Shapur and Singara.

on the north they went up to the border of the territory of the Ortaye.¹⁸² They devoured and ravaged these regions, consuming everything in them, so that even before the war broke out, we could see with our (own) eyes what was said about the Babylonian: 'Before him the land is like the garden of Eden, behind him a wasted wilderness'.¹⁸³ If the command of the Lord had not hindered them,¹⁸⁴ they would have devoured people and cattle, as we heard that they did in one village where some people put down a small child in a field while doing their work. Before they had gone from end to end of the field, (the locusts) sprung on him and put an end to his life. As soon as (we were in) April, there began to be a shortage of corn and everything else, and four *modii* of wheat were being sold for a *denarius*.¹⁸⁵ In June and July the inhabitants of these regions had to use their wits to keep alive.¹⁸⁶ They sowed millet (in the hope) that it would meet their need, but it was insufficient for them because it did not flourish.¹⁸⁷ By the end of the year misery surrounded the people as a result of famine and they were selling [265] their possessions for half their value, whether cattle or oxen, sheep or pigs.¹⁸⁸ Because the locusts had consumed the entire crop, leaving no food or nourishment for people or animals, many left their own districts and moved to other regions of the north and west. The infirm in the villages, along with the elderly and the young, women

¹⁸² One of the peoples of Anzitene, the Armenian satrapy later incorporated with Sophene to form Armenia IV in 530; cf. Nöldeke, 'Zwei Völker', 163-165.

¹⁸³ Joel 2 : 3.

¹⁸⁴ Ps.-Joshua mentions nothing of litanies, magic circles or other apotropaic devices to counteract the descent of these creatures. In contrast, during the locust plague of c. 591-595 in Sasanid Arbayistan, the insects are said to have obeyed the holy man Nisanaya and to have left his vegetable garden. *Life of Rabban Bar-Idta* 19 (Budge, 223). Cf. Trombley, *HRC* II 187.

¹⁸⁵ Four *modii* to the *solidus* (= Syriac *denarius* [*aureus*]) was a famine rate, and is the dearest cited in Jones, *LRE*, 445f. Cf. Heichelheim, 'Syria', 183f.; B. Croke, 'Famine', *ODB*, 777f.

¹⁸⁶ In c. 591-595, the people of Sasanid Arbayistan also used their wits to avert starvation; they collected, dried and cooked the locusts, and even stored them up for food. Bar 'Idta directed his monks to do the same. *Life of Rabban Bar-Idta* 22 (Budge, 227f.).

¹⁸⁷ Other crops may have been sown as well. For example, in 591-595, the Syrians of Arbayistan planted millet, but also sowed summer peas, cucumbers, watermelons and 'other small vegetables'. *Life of Rabban Bar-Idta* 22 (Budge, 227f.). Cf. Heichelheim, 'Syria', 133.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Heichelheim 'Syria', 155f. for pre-4th c. livestock prices.

and children, and those racked by hunger who were unable to walk to distant areas, went into the cities to live by begging. Many villages and hamlets were emptied of people, but (the people) did not [escape] punishment, not even those who went to distant regions.¹⁸⁹ What is written of the Israelite people, 'Wherever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil',¹⁹⁰ similarly applied to them. The pestilence overtook them in the districts to which they had gone, and death also followed those who went into Edessa.¹⁹¹ I shall shortly give an account of that as best I can, but no one, in my opinion, can describe it as it (really) was.

I will now tell you about the scarcity, as you asked me. I did not want to write anything about it, but I will force myself (to do so), so that you should not think I have ignored your command. Wheat was being sold at this time at four *modii* a *denarius*, barley at six; a *kab*¹⁹² of chickpeas cost five hundred *nummi*,¹⁹³ a *kab* of beans four hundred *nummi*, and a *kab* of lentils three hundred and sixty *nummi*.¹⁹⁴ Meat

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¹⁸⁹ The Syrian church of Sasanid Arbayistan showed more effective crisis management during the locust plague of c. 591-595. When the monks at Bar-'Idta's monastery became disgusted with their diet of roasted locusts and asked to migrate to localities where bread could be found, Bar-'Idta used apocalyptic arguments drawn from the Old Testament, as for example: 'And Isaac in like manner suffered loss when he went down to Abimelech of Philistia'. When the monks relented, the Christian landowner Zandhaprokh is said to have given the monastery 1000 Sasanid silver *staters* and three camels to help buy food, which Bar-'Idta then procured in Media, Huzaye and the *territorium* of Nisibis. Additional supplies came as gifts from Mar Abha, metropolitan of Nisibis (who also supplied two mules), from the rich Christian landowner Malbed of the village of Barzane/Shahar-Sa'ar and from the free men of Beth Ghurbaq. *Life of Rabban Bar-'Idta* 11, 22 (Budge, 214-16; 228-30).

¹⁹⁰ Judges 2 : 15

¹⁹¹ The onset of pestilence is also reported as a result of the locust plague of c. 591-595 in Sasanid Arbayistan. Various 'sicknesses, and boils, and burning sores' were thought to affect people who ate too much after once having suffered starvation. *Life of Rabban Bar-'Idta* 22 (Budge, 232).

¹⁹² The term is derived from Hebrew. A Syro-Palestinian unit of weight, one *kab* equalled 5 Roman 'heavy' pounds (*librae*). Schilbach, *Byzantinische Metrologie*, 76. It indicates a dry measure of approximately 2 litres.

¹⁹³ Equivalent to twelve and a half *folles*. Between 498-511 the *nummus* was tariffed at c. 16,800 to the *solidus*. Hendy, *Byzantine Monetary Economy*, 478.

¹⁹⁴ Forty *nummi* were equivalent to one *folles*. These were prevailing rates toward the end of the indiction in late summer. Beans, chickpeas and lentils (φακῆ) were common products in Mesopotamia. Cf. *SEG* 7, no. 437 = Heichelheim, 'Syria', 130. In Egypt, these legumes sold at roughly the same price as barley. Cf. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 25f. Olives were seldom grown for export in Mesopotamia because of their

was still not expensive, but as time went on the scarcity increased and the affliction [266] of hunger intensified upon the people.¹⁹⁵ Inedible items - clothes, and household implements and furniture - became cheap, as things (other than food) were being sold for half or a third of their value, but were (still) inadequate to sustain their owners because of the increasing shortage of bread.¹⁹⁶ Our father Mar Peter went to the emperor at this time to urge him to waive the *synteleia*,¹⁹⁷ but the governor got hold of the village landowners, put them under great pressure, and required them (to pay up). While the bishop was still (trying to) persuade the emperor, the gold was sent by the governor to the capital.¹⁹⁸ When the emperor saw that the gold had arrived, he did

inferior quality, but must have been produced for a regional market. In the 520's, the monastery of Addai the *chorepiskopos* exported much wine, but had to buy its olive oil. John of Ephesus, 'Addai the *chorepiskopos*', *Lives of the Eastern Saints* 8 (PO 17, 129f.) The absence of oil in ps.-Joshua's figures may reflect a trifling oil surplus in storage, a consequence of the fact that the olive was not a well developed cash crop in Osrhoene. It is otherwise difficult to explain the level of starvation at the height of the famine. Olive oil turns up occasionally in the inscriptions in the House of Archives at Dura Europus (3rd c. A.D.). Heichelheim, 'Syria', 136f., 184f. = *SEG* 7, nos. 413, 414, 415. Cf. Jones, *LRE*, 446f. Cf. the asymmetrical example of the famine at Clazomenae (4th c. B.C.), where citizens lent their stored oil to the city-state at interest and 'the oil was exported to buy grain'. Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply*, 71f. Oil was, of course, used in Syrian monastic liturgies. 'Rules of Rabbula for the Monks', Canon 7, in Vööbus, *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, 28.

¹⁹⁵ The slow rise in the price of meat was a consequence of the market being flooded with large numbers of animals for sale. A Palestinian rabbinic document of c. 350 puts the price of a pound (*litra*) of meat at 2 *folles*. Heichelheim, 'Syria', 185. These bronze coins had much less value than the *folles* of the Anastasian bronze coinage reform of 498. In 6th c. Egypt, 120 lb. of meat to the *solidus* was considered quite high. *P.Oxy.* 1920. Cited in Jones, *LRE*, 446. On the fluctuating value of the bronze currency, see J. Durliat, 'La valeur relative de l'or, de l'argent et du cuivre dans l'empire protobyzantine (IVe-VIIIe siècle)', *Revue numismatique*, série 6, 22 (1980), 138-154. See below, n. 199.

¹⁹⁶ For scattered examples of clothing prices, see Jones, *LRE*, 447f. Cf. Heichelheim 'Syria', 186f., where prices at Dura Europus are given in devalued silver *denarii* c. 234-240 A.D. For Egypt, there is sundry evidence on clothing and furniture in Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 33f., 43.

¹⁹⁷ Payment of the land and capitation taxes (whose combined payment is here called the *synteleia*) was made in coin by the later 5th c. Cf. Jones, *LRE* 460 and 1196f., n. 120, with extracts from *Cod. Iust.* 10.27.1-2.

¹⁹⁸ The annual tax assessment varied according to the needs of the central administration. Cf. Jones, *LRE*, 452-456. Data are usually lacking to estimate the *average* tax burden on private citizens except for provinces in the diocese of Aegyptus. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 153-160. The tribute imposed by the Muslim Arabs on

not want to let go of it, but so as not to dismiss our father empty-handed, he remitted two *folles*¹⁹⁹ to the villagers and the prices which they were paying,²⁰⁰ and released the citizens from the duty to draw water for Roman (soldiers).²⁰¹

The governor himself then went to the emperor, still wearing his sword (of office), and left Eusebius holding his position and governing the city.²⁰² When Eusebius saw that the bakers could not make enough bread for the market, on account of the mass of villagers now filling up the city, he decreed for the sake of the needy who were without bread in their houses that everyone who so wished could make bread and sell it in the market.²⁰³ He released wheat from the store to some Jewish

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Osrhoene at the time of the conquest in 639 reflects the taxation of the previous decade under the Byzantine administration, and is suggestive of the broader fiscal pattern. The Late Roman land and capitation taxes (*annona* and *capitatio*) were consolidated into the Muslim *jizya* as a single levy, coming to 1 *solidus*, 2 *modii* of wheat, 2 *qist* of oil, and 2 *qist* of vinegar per person. Ya'qub b. Ibrahim Abu Yusuf, *Kitab al-Kharaj* (Cairo, 1962-63), 39-41, cited from Lewis, *Islam from the Prophet Muhammad to the Capture of Constantinople*, I 231. Cf. Muhammad b. al-Hasan Shaybani, *Kitab al-Asl in The Islamic Law of Nations: Shaybani's Siyar*, tr. M. Khadduri (Baltimore, 1966), 143 and nn. 6-8.

¹⁹⁹ Anastasius' coinage reform saw the issue of the new bronze *folles* in 498. It was probably tariffed at around 420 *folles* to the *solidus*. The second phase of the reform in 512 saw the value of the enlarged *folles* increase to 210 to the *solidus*. Hendy, *Byzantine Monetary Economy*, 477f. Two *folles* were, in themselves, a miserly return for crop losses, unless other compensation was forthcoming. The dole was intended for all cities and their *territoria* in the civil province of Osrhoene. The attractive new *folles* were good propaganda for emperor's policies. *Ibid.*, Plate 14, nos. 1-4. The measure left dissatisfied speculators in Constantinople who had previously taken advantage of the unstable tariff between gold and bronze coinage. Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicle* 32, 110.

²⁰⁰ Meaning obscure, text apparently deficient.

²⁰¹ One of the many types of forced labour (*munera sordida* or ἀργαρεία, viz. *corvées*) imposed on agriculturalists. It does not appear in A. H. M. Jones' list. Other examples of this practice include providing animals for the imperial post, offering lodging to public officials and soldiers in transit, milling grain and baking soldiers' bread. Cf. Jones, *LRE*, 451f. Cf. G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World from the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquest* (London, 1981), 14-16 and 539f., n. 8; B. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire. The Roman Army in the East* (Oxford, 1992), 291-297.

²⁰² I.e. in mid- to late summer, when the praetorian prefects submitted estimates of the tax requirements for the new indiction beginning on 1 September. Jones, *LRE*, 449-451. 'Eusebius 21', *PLRE* II 431.

²⁰³ The bakers were an urban guild (*collegium* or σύστημα) strictly regulated by the urban magistrates or provincial governor and normally enjoying a monopoly. As the metropolis of Osrhoene, Edessa was subject to the direct decree of the latter. Cf. Jones, *LRE*, 735, 859f.

women who came (to him), and they made bread for the market, but even so the poor still suffered, because they did not have the money with which to buy the bread. They wandered through the streets, colonnades, and squares begging for a scrap [267] of bread, but no one had any spare bread in his house.²⁰⁴ When one of them got some *oboli*²⁰⁵ from begging but [could] not buy any bread with them, he would buy a turnip, cabbage, or mallow and eat it raw.²⁰⁶ A shortage of vegetables therefore developed, and everything became scarce in the city and the villages. Some people dared to enter the sanctuaries and (driven) by their hunger they ate the host as if it were ordinary bread, while others cut off inedible bits from dead <carcasses> and boiled and ate them.²⁰⁷ Let your honesty be a witness to these things.

The year 812 (= 500/1 A.D.)

41 Wine was sold at six measures per *denarius* after the vintage this year, and raisins at three hundred *nummi* per *kab*.²⁰⁸ Hunger increased

²⁰⁴ At Amid, the wealthy hoarded grain during the famine. John the metropolitan warned them in sermons to sell or even give it to the poor. Ps. Zachariah, *HE* 7.3 (Hamilton-Brooks, 154f.). Such resistance to sharing is also reported during the locust plague of c. 591-595 in Sasanid Arbayistan. The monks at Rabban Bar-'Idta's monastery complained that they were not obliged to share their meagrely rationed provisions with the poor and orphans. In consequence, the *hegumen* himself doled out two bread-cakes and some roasted locusts for the adults to eat, and smaller portions to the children. At the height of the famine, the monastery is said to have been feeding well over 200 people. During one twenty-day period, it received only five loaves of bread. *Life of Rabban Bar-'Idta* 22 (Budge, 231).

²⁰⁵ The obol or K bronze coin was tariffed at two per *folles*. The Greek *kappa*, here used as the number '20', stands for 20 *nummia*, the smallest denomination of bronze coin.

²⁰⁶ Baked bread cost several *folles* even in times of relative abundance. Rabbinic texts from Palestine indicate prices of 2 and 10 *folles* for a loaf of bread c. 350-400 A.D. Heichelheim, 'Syria', 184. By the 6th c., however, such prices would have been high, because the new *folles* of Anastasius were larger and had more buying power. Hendy, *Byzantine Monetary Economy*, 291f., 338-341, 478. On turnips and cabbages, see Heichelheim, 'Syria', 133.

²⁰⁷ For reliance on coarse plants and human flesh in time of famine, see Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply*, 28f. Cannibalism is reported during the Sasanid occupation of Amid during the winter of 504/5. Below, § 77.

²⁰⁸ Ps.-Joshua here refers to the local vintage near Edessa and Harran. Cf. below, § 52. Rabbinic texts mention a single *xestes* (= Latin *sextarius*, approx. 0.5 litre) of wine selling at prices of 2 and 10 *folles* in the 4th c. Heichelheim, 'Syria', 184. The prescribed price for ordinary wine in Numidia and Mauretania in 445 was 200 *xestai* per *solidus*. Jones, *LRE* 446f. Other known sites of wine production in or near Osrhoene were Sura

in the villages and the city,²⁰⁹ as those who stayed in the villages were (now) eating vetches, and others were roasting and eating shrivelled grapes,²¹⁰ although there was not enough even of these to satisfy them. Those who (had come) <into> the city roamed around the streets, picking out and eating the dung-spattered roots and leaves of vegetables. They slept in the colonnades and streets, howling night and day from the pang of hunger. Their bodies grew thin, they lost heart, and they became like <corpses>²¹¹ on account of the thinness of their bodies. The whole city was full of them, and they began dying in the colonnades and streets.

When Demosthenes the governor went up to the emperor, he told him about this distress, and the emperor gave him a considerable sum of money to divide among the poor.²¹² When he got (back) from him [268] to Edessa, he marked many of them on their necks with lead seals and gave each of them a pound of bread per day. However, they could not live (on this), for they had been debilitated by the distress of hunger which consumed them. Mortality increased in November, and again in December when the frost and ice appeared. Since they spent the night in the colonnades and streets, the sleep of death took hold of them in their sleep. There were children and infants bleating in all the streets, some of whose mothers had died, others of whom had abandoned (their offspring) and fled when they had asked (them) for something to eat, for they had nothing to give them. Bodies were lying stretched out in all the streets and the citizens could not bury them, for while taking out

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(midway between Callinicum and Dausara, but on the far bank of the Euphrates) and the village of Zaira da-Sacharae ('the white barrage') on the Khabur river. A 3rd c. papyrus mentions a plot of irrigated land at Zaira containing 600 vinestumps. *The Excavations at Dura-Europus Final Report V. Part I: The Parchments and Papyri*, ed. C. B. Welles *et alii* (New Haven, 1959), no. 26. John of Ephesus reports a large vineyard in the *territorium* of Martyropolis and an export trade in wine to Cappadocia from a monastery that apparently lay on the slopes of Tur 'Abdin. 'Life of Habib' and 'Addai the chorepiskopos', *Lives of the Eastern Saints* 1 and 8 (PO 17, 12-14, 129f.). On Sura, see Heichelheim, 'Syria', 131 (hemp rope production), 139f. (viticulture), 205 (importation of bread).

²⁰⁹ MS.: 'cities'.

²¹⁰ حبة. Cf. Wright, *ad loc.*: 'the small withered grapes that had fallen from the vines before attaining maturity'. On bitter vetches and lentils, see H. Helbaek, 'Late bronze age and Byzantine crops at Beycesultan in Anatolia', *AS* 11 (1961), 79-82. Cf. Heichelheim, 'Syria', 130.

²¹¹ Read with Martin 𐤒𐤓𐤕𐤕. MS.: 𐤒𐤓𐤕𐤕, 'young plant'. Wright: 𐤒𐤓𐤕𐤕?, 'jackals'.

²¹² See 'Demosthenes 3', *PLRE* II 353.

the first ones which had died, they found others as soon as they returned. Through the diligence of Mar Nonnus the *xenodochos*, the brothers would subsequently go round and gather up the bodies.²¹³ The whole city would assemble at the door of the *xenodocheion* and go out to bury them morning after morning, and Mar Tewathel the priest and Mar Stratonikos, who later on was elevated to the rank of the episcopate in the city of Harran, (both of them) stewards of the (City) Church, set up a <sick-room>²¹⁴ in the building of the (City) Church of Edessa.²¹⁵ The (famine-)stricken would go in and lie down there, and many bodies were found in the <sick-room> and buried with those of the *xenodocheion*.

- 43 The governor blocked the gates of the porticoes (*basilikai*) at the winter bath-house (*demosion*) and put down straw and matting in it. (People) slept there, but it was not enough [269] for them. When the nobles of the city saw this, they also set up <sick-rooms>, and many went in and found shelter in them. Even Roman (soldiers) established places; the ill slept in them and (the soldiers) took care of their expenses. They died a distressing and miserable death, and while every day many of them were buried, (the number of mortalities) still rose, for word had spread through the *chora* of the city that the Edessenes looked after those in need, and an immeasurable mass of humanity had therefore come into the city. The bath under the Church of the Apostles, by the Great Gate, was full of sick people, and every day

²¹³ The 'guest-master' (*xenodochos*) of a local church ran its hostel and other institutions for receiving migrants. Cf. Jones, *LRE*, 901, etc. He often held the rank of presbyter. Cf. 'ξενοδοχείου' and 'ξενοδόχος', G. W. H. Lampe (ed.), *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961), 932. Syriac canon law contains references to inns and guesthouses, e.g. 'Rules of Rabbula for the Monks', Canon 3, in Vööbus, *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, 27.

²¹⁴ ܡܬܝܬܐ (subsequently ܡܬܝܬܐ), probably read ܡܬܝܬܐ, 'sick-room'; cf. Brockelmann, *Lexicon*, 5. Nöldeke, 'Wright's edition', 687, disagrees and thinks of a Greek word hidden therein. Dolabani: 'a house roofed with ܡܬܝܬܐ', which last, according to Audo, *Dictionary*, 6, are 'mud bricks baked in fire'.

²¹⁵ The Great Church, sometimes known as that of St. Thomas. Cf. above, § 31. The Chronicle of Edessa mentions another hospital (*nosokomeion*) built in the episcopate of Nonnus (457-471). It was constructed in the so-called House of the Paupers and Lepers outside the Beth Shemesh Gate near the southeastern corner of the fortifications. Nonnus later added the *martyrion* of Sts. Cosmas and Damian to this facility. *Chron. Edessenum*, anno 769 (Guidi, 7f.) (version). See Map IV and Segal, *Edessa*, Plan I and Plate 5a. (Beth Shemesh Gate). Cf. 'νοσοκομείον', Lampe, *Greek Patristic Lexicon*, 992.

many bodies were taken out of it.²¹⁶ The whole city took care collectively to accompany those who were taken out of the *xenodocheion*, with psalms, praises, hymns, and songs full of the hope of resurrection. Women also (took part) with mournful lamentation and emotional cries. At their head went Mar Peter, the worthy pastor, and with him was the governor and all the free-born. When these (bodies) had been buried, everyone then came back and accompanied (the bodies) which were in his own neighbourhood. When the cemeteries of the *xenodocheion* and the (City) Church were full, the governor went out and opened up the old graves by the Church of Mar Qona, which had been carefully made by those of former times.²¹⁷ These were filled up, and then they opened others, but they were (still) not sufficient for them, so finally they were opening and filling any sort of old grave of whatever kind.²¹⁸ Every day from the beginning of November to the end [270] of March, more than a hundred bodies were taken out of the *xenodocheion*, on many days a hundred and twenty to a hundred and thirty.²¹⁹ In that time nothing could be heard in any of the streets of the city except lamentation over the deceased or the cries of those in pain. Many died in the courtyards of the (City) Church, as also in the city squares and the inns. They were even dying on the roads as they were coming to enter the city. Again in February the shortage got worse and mortality increased. Wheat was now being sold at thirteen *kabs* a *denarius* and barley at eighteen, while a pound of meat cost a hundred

²¹⁶ The church was built in the archiepiscopate of Ibas-Hibha (435-457). It originally had a different but unknown name. The chronicler observes: 'This [bishop] built the new church which is nowadays called the temple of the Apostles.' *Chron. Edessenum*. Anno 746 (Guidi, 7) (version). The church lay east of the town centre on a street leading to the Great Gate. The gate itself stands in a shallow salient that projects into the bend of the Daisan, which has a bridge at this point. See Map IV.

²¹⁷ Mar Qona was the first known Christian church to be built in Edessa. Bishop Qona is said to have laid its foundations in 312/3. It evidently lay in the precinct of a 3rd c. cemetery that had impressively carved, perhaps pre-Christian, funerary monuments. Cf. *Chron. Edessenum*, anno 624 (Guidi, 5). The first publicly recognised Christian cemetery was built near the church of Mar Qona and dedicated by archbishop Aytallaha in 323/4. *Chron. Edessenum*, anno 635 and 636 (Guidi, 5) (version). Its location is unknown.

²¹⁸ I.e. pre-Christian graves.

²¹⁹ The Chinese annals mention the appearance of a great comet on 13 January 501. Ps.-Joshua may have shifted its position in his chronology perhaps deliberately, making it a portent rather than a sign in the midst of the famine. Cf. above § 37, n. 176.

nummi, a pound of fowl three hundred *nummi*, and an egg forty *nummi*. In a word, everything edible was in short supply.

- 44 Petitions were made in March concerning plague, that it might be held back from the strangers, and the citizens (of Edessa), when praying for them, were like the blessed David when he said to the angel destroying his people, 'If I have sinned and acted perversely, what wrongs have these innocent sheep done? Let your hand be upon me and upon my family.'²²⁰ In April, however, plague broke out among the citizens. In a single day many biers were taken out, and no one could grasp their number. This devastation of plague not only affected Edessa, but from Antioch to Nisibis people were destroyed in this way and tortured by famine and plague.²²¹ In this year many of the rich died, who had not suffered from hunger, as did many of the nobles of the city. In June and July, after the harvest, we were hoping that from now on we would be delivered from the shortage, but it did not turn out for us as we had hoped. On the contrary, the wheat of the new harvest was being sold at as much as five *modii a denarius*.²²²

The year 813 (= 501/2 A.D.)

- 45 After these calamities of locusts, famine, and plague which I have described to you, [271] something of a breathing-space emerged for us, by the mercy of God. (This was) that we might be able to endure what was (still) to come, as we perceived from the (subsequent) events.

²²⁰ II Samuel 24 : 17.

²²¹ The inscriptions of the Limestone Massif in Syria I reveal no sharp breaks in building activity at this time, suggesting that the provinces west of the Euphrates were not affected so badly as Osroene. Plague deaths are occasionally mentioned in the epigraphy, but not for this period. Cf. the inscription of bishop Wa'ir of Zorava (ob. 542/3) 'upon whom God brought the fate of the bubon in the armpit.' Waddington, *Inscriptions*, 2497. (Date corrected. Written communication from Johannes Koder and Marcel Restle). Cf. the synchronism of the known spread of the bubonic plague in Palestine and Arabia with three funerary inscriptions at Gaza between 14 August-1 September 541 and, after it began to move inland, five at Nessana, Rehovot and 'Avdat between 27 October-19 December 541 (four of them 2-16 November). Meimaris, *Chronological Systems*, nos. 123-125, 283-287 (possibly also nos. 280-281). Thus, it took about two months for the plague to advance c. 60 km. overland. In general, see L. Conrad, 'Epidemic disease in central Syria in the late sixth century: some new insights from the verse of Hassan ibn Thabit', *BMGs* 18 (1994), 12-14, 53-57. Cf. the chronology in T. Honoré, *Tribonian*, 61-64. Averil Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity AD 395-600* (London, 1993), 164 and 231, nn. 146-147.

²²² This is still at famine rate.

Thus there was a plentiful vintage (this year), wine was sold from the press at twenty-five measures a *denarius*, and the poor were well provided from the vineyards by the harvest of raisins. Farmers and vine-dressers said that the harvest of raisins was more plentiful than the wheat because a hot wind came up when the grapes started to <ripen>,²²³ and the bulk of them dried up. It was said by the discerning that this happened through the providence of God, the Lord of all, and the event was (a case of) the mingling of mercy with punishment, so that the villagers might survive on the raisins which had (now) appeared, and not perish from hunger as in the previous year, since even at this time wheat was (still) being sold at only four *modii* a *denarius*, and barley at six. Then such a sign of (God's) mercy appeared during October and November.²²⁴ The whole winter of this year was exceedingly rainy, and the seed that was sown had shot up in some places above a man's height before April arrived. Even tilled (parts)²²⁵ of land bore little less than that (part) which had been sown. Similarly, even the roofs of houses bore a lot of grass, which some people cut and sold as 'mules'-grass,²²⁶ from the fields. Because it had spikes and was full grown in height, it was not recognised (as such) by the buyers. [272] We were expecting and hoping during this year that there would be a big reduction in the price of corn as in earlier years. But this expectation was not realised, for a parching wind blew up in May for three days, and all the corn in our country was scorched, except in a few places.

During this month, when the day came on which was celebrated that evil festival of the Greek myths, on which information was given by us above,²²⁷ an order came from the emperor Anastasius that the dancers should dance no more in any of the cities of his imperial domain.²²⁸ Therefore anyone who pays attention to the outcome of events will not criticise us for having said that the punishments of hunger and plague

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²²³ Read *ἄνωγλ*. MS.: *ἄνωγλ*.

²²⁴ I.e. the fruits of the vintage were collected in October-November 501.

²²⁵ *ἄνωγλ*. Audo, *Dictionary*, 480: 'close furrows'. Perhaps read *ἄνωγλ*, 'barren' (Wright).

²²⁶ *ἄνωγλ* ἀγρωστis, one of several species of wild grass that also include 'dog's-tooth grass' and 'sea barley'.

²²⁷ Cf. §§ 27, 30, 33.

²²⁸ Cf. Procopius of Gaza, *Panegyric* 16 (ed./tr. Chauvot, p. 18/42); and Introduction, pp. xvi-xvii.

developed and came upon us because of the evil which the citizens committed at this festival. For consider this: less than thirty days after its abolition, wheat, which had (previously) been sold at four *modii* a *denarius*, was being sold for twelve (*modii* a *denarius*); and barley, which had been selling at six *modii* (a *denarius*), was now being sold at twenty-two. So it was made manifestly clear to everyone that the will of God can bless even a small crop and give plenty to those who repent of their sins. For as I said (above), all the corn was scorched,²²⁹ but from the small surviving remnant all this alleviation occurred within thirty days. Someone, however, might perhaps still say that I have not reasoned very well, for this repentance, because of which there was mercy, was not voluntary; on the contrary, the emperor compulsorily abolished the festival because he decreed that on no account were the dancers to dance. We say, however, that God, on account of the abundance of his grace, was looking for a pretext to be merciful, even on those who are unworthy. [273] His mercy upon Ahab serves as an example for us, when (Ahab) was put to shame by the reproof of Elijah, but (God) did not bring about in his lifetime the evil which had been decreed against his house.²³⁰

I am not in this way saying, however, that this was the only sin committed in our city, for in fact the sins perpetrated in private and public were numerous. But because even the rulers were involved in them, I do not intend to specify these sins, lest I give an opportunity to those who love to criticise to say against us that I am speaking against the rulers. However, in order not to leave the matter completely hidden, because I promised earlier on to show you from whence the war was stirred up against us,²³¹ and in order not to say anything further against the arrogant, I shall (simply) put down a word of a prophet from which you will understand (what I mean). When he saw that his fellow-countrymen were doing things which are like these presently done in our city, and even more so where you are and throughout the whole *chora*, he said to them in the name of the Lord, 'Alas for him who says to his father, "What are you begetting?", or to his mother, "What are you bearing?"'.²³² It is best to keep quiet about other things,

²²⁹ Cf. § 45.

²³⁰ Cf. I Kings 21 : 17-29.

²³¹ Cf. § 6.

²³² Isaiah 45 : 10.

for one should pay attention to the word of Scripture which declares, 'A prudent man will stay quiet at that time, for it is a time of evil'.²³³ However, if our Lord allows us to see you in health, we will say (more) to you about these things as far as we are able.²³⁴

But now, listen to the horrors which took place this year and to the sign which became visible on the day they occurred, because you have required us (to write about) this too. On the twenty-second of August this year, on the night preceding Friday,²³⁵ we saw a huge fire [274] burning in the northern quarter (of the sky) all night and accordingly thought that the whole earth was going <to be consumed> by a torrent of fire that night.²³⁶ The mercy of our Lord preserved us unharmed, but a letter was sent to us by some acquaintances of ours who were on their way to Jerusalem, in which it was (said) that the city of Ptolemais, otherwise known as Acre, was flattened on the night that the huge blazing fire was seen, and nothing in it was left standing. Furthermore, some days later some Tyrians and Sidonians came to us and told us that parts of their cities, i.e., part of Tyre and part of Sidon, also fell down on the same day as the fire appeared and Ptolemais was flattened.²³⁷ In Beirut,²³⁸ on the day when Acre was destroyed, only the synagogue of the Jews collapsed,²³⁹ but the (entire) population of Nicomedia was handed over to Satan to be punished.²⁴⁰ many of them were attacked by

²³³ Amos 5 : 13.

²³⁴ On the interpretation of this cryptic passage, cf. the Introduction, pp. xix-xx.

²³⁵ I.e., Thursday night. The day of the week is correct. Ginzel, *Handbuch der Chronologie*, 129-131.

²³⁶ This appearance of the aurora borealis is also reported in *Chron. Edessenum*, anno 813 (Guidi, 8) (version), but with no apocalyptic detail. Chinese sources indicate increased sunspot activity at this time. Schove-Fletcher, *Eclipses and Comets*, 321f. It is conceivable that these phenomena were causally related to the seismic disturbances reported at Tyre, Sidon, Acre and Ptolemais. (Oral communication from Gareth Leyshon and Antonio Irranca.)

²³⁷ All these towns lay on the coast of Phoenice I. M. Mundell Mango, 'Sidon' and 'Tyre', *ODB*, 1892f., 2134. Cf. Grumel, *Chronologie*, 478, who adds Neocaesarea in Pontus Polemoniacus (present-day Niksar) to the list. The latter town was more probably destroyed with Nicopolis in Armenia I in September 499. Cf. above, §§ 34-35, and Theophanes, *Chronographia* AM 5995 (Mango-Scott, 223, n. 3).

²³⁸ The provincial capital of Phoenice I. M. Mundell Mango, 'Berytus', *ODB*, 284f.

²³⁹ A law given on 15 February 423 for the praetorian prefect of Oriens forbade the construction of new synagogues and required old ones to be left in their present state. *Cod. Theod.* 16.8.25. Its implications for the building in Beirut are not clear.

²⁴⁰ Nicomedia, provincial capital of Bithynia in northwestern Asia Minor. Cf. C. Foss, 'Nikomedia', *ODB*, 1483f. 'Nicomedia', *PECS*, 623f.

evil spirits, until they recalled the words of our Lord,²⁴¹ remained constant in fasting and prayer, and (thus) received healing.²⁴²

48 Now on the very day on which that fire appeared, the king of the Persians, Kawad son of Peroz, gathered the whole army of the Persians and, coming up by the northern (route), crossed the Roman border with the army of Huns which he had with him.²⁴³ He laid siege to Theodosiopolis in Armenia and took it in a few days, for the governor of that place, whose name was Constantine,²⁴⁴ turned against the

²⁴¹ Cf. Matt. 17 : 21; Mk. 9 : 29.

²⁴² On 'possession' as a phenomenon of Anatolian religious psychopathology, see the provisional remarks of S. Mitchell, *Anatolia II* (Oxford, 1993), 139-150. For a different view, see Trombley, *HRC* II 108f.

²⁴³ Cf. above, § 24. Kawad's advance to the frontier began in the Sasanid Caucasian provinces (Arran, Adurbadagan and Balasagan) and followed the course of the Araxes river through Persarmenia (Armin). Procopius' claim (*Wars* 1.7.3) that he moved faster than the 'rumours of war' preceding him (αὐτάγγελος) cannot, at first sight, be accepted. At least some of the Huns were Hephthalites serving as mercenaries. Cf. the encounter between one of their detachments and the monk Ya'qub at Endielion (location unknown), a day's march from Amid. Procopius, *Wars* 1.7.5-11 (Dewing I 50-53). Pace Dilleman, Procopius' use of the term 'place' or 'village' with the genitive plural (ἐν χωρίῳ Ἐνδιήλων) suggests the name of a village rather than a region. *Haute Mésopotamie*, 87, n. 1.

²⁴⁴ Ps.-Joshua refers to his office as ܐܡ ܕܥܝܪܐܢ ܕܥܝܪܐܢ ('governor of that place'), which is consistent with civil office or military command. The probably correct view is that Constantine was *comes Armeniae*, whom Procopius states was 'not in command of Roman soldiers, but only of a few Armenians'. *De Aedificiis* 3.1.27. Armenia Interior, where Theodosiopolis-Erzerum lay, was technically allied territory. Its fortifications were financed, temporarily garrisoned by, and named after Theodosius II. Cf. Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian*, 25f., 49, 119-122 (not a very lucid discussion). Zeno imposed the *comes Armeniae* and degraded the satrap to a symbolic position after the latter sided with Illus' and Leontius' rebellion in 484-488. It is clear from Procopius that the *comes Armeniae* required the military experience to lead the troops of the Armenian *naḫarars*; at the same time he had to collect certain tax monies, the ἀρμενικὰ δημόσια, which were either *annonae* or some form of tribute, after a law of Anastasius dated 496. *Cod. Iust.* 10.16.13. The latter explains his subordination to the praetorian prefect of Oriens. Even so, his *officium* must have contained a detachment of officers who could work with the indigenous troops. In emergencies, he could call in the *dux Armeniae* and *dux utriusque Ponti*. The latter command was created *post* c. 470, but there is no evidence for it in the War of 502-506. *Cod. Iust.* 12.59 (60). 10.4 (Krueger, 485). Cf. Jones, *LRE*, 609. The deployments mentioned in the early 5th c. *Notitia Dignitatum* were out of date by this time. The *dux utriusque Ponti* must have taken over some of the formations previously commanded by the old *dux Armeniae* (whom ps.-Joshua styles as 'dux of Melitene'), as they lay inside the new circumscription. Cf. Not. Dign. Or. XXXVIII, and below, § 51. Martindale proposes that Constantine was

Romans and surrendered it, because of some hostility he harboured against the emperor. Kawad therefore plundered the city, and destroyed and burnt it.²⁴⁵ [275] He also destroyed all the villages in the northern region and took the survivors into captivity.²⁴⁶ He made Constantine (one of) his army commander(s), left a garrison in Theodosiopolis, and went onwards.²⁴⁷

The year 814 (= 502/3 A.D.)

During this year great disasters struck the region of Mesopotamia where we live, so that what Christ our Lord decreed in his gospel against Jerusalem and in fact fulfilled, and also what was proclaimed about the end of this age, do indeed conform to what happened to us at this time. For after earthquakes had happened in one place and another, as I have written for you, and after there had been famines, plagues,

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magister militum vacans specially sent to watch the frontier in view of Kawad's threatening attitude. 'Constantinus 14', *PLRE* II 313. This is consistent with his rank, previous military experience in Thrace, and the titulare given him by in all the sources, e.g. 'a powerful Roman general' (στρατηγὸς Ῥωμαίων δυνατός). John Malalas, *Chronographia*, 398, line 15. But it seems to be an unnecessary construction in the light of what is known about the *comes Armeniae*. On the sources, see Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian*, 85-96. Cf. the useful critique of Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War*, 79f.

²⁴⁵ Ps.-Zachariah of Mytilene gives a completely different version, saying that Kawad took Constantine prisoner and treated the fortress's inhabitants mercifully. *HE* 7.3 (Hamilton-Brooks, 152f.). Ps.-Joshua is certainly right about Constantine's defection, because Kawad made him one of his generals. Below, §§ 55, 74. Furthermore, ps.-Zachariah probably exaggerates Kawad's kindness to Theodosiopolis-Erzerum's inhabitants to contrast their fate with that of the people of Amid. Below, § 53. Theodosiopolis' other names were Karin and Erzerum ('city of the Romans'). Originally a small hill fortress (φρούριον), it was sited east of the frontier in the satrapies of Armenia Interior in the portage between the headwaters of the Euphrates and Araxes. Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian*, 119-122. The precise reason for Procopius' calling the place 'easily assaulted' (εὐάλωτον) in 502 is unknown; by this he seems implicitly to reject ps.-Joshua's view that Constantine's treason explains the fall of the fortress. Procopius, *De Aedificiis* 3.5.2-4. Cf. N. Garsoian, 'Theodosiopolis', *ODB*, 2054.

²⁴⁶ *Viz.* the villages in the pro-Roman Armenia satrapy of Asthianene, and perhaps Chorazane and Belabitenne. Cf. E. Honigmann, *Die Ostgrenze des byzantinischen Reiches von 363 bis 1071* (Brussels, 1935), Map I.

²⁴⁷ The period of rounding up captives in the Armenian mountains lasted some six weeks, between about 25 August to 5 October, when Kawad's army reached Amid. Ps.-Joshua fails to mention the Sasanid capture of Martyropolis during this time. Below, § 50, n. 257.

panics, and terrors, and mighty signs had appeared from heaven, nation rose up against nation and kingdom against kingdom,²⁴⁸ we fell by the edge of the sword and were taken captive all over the place, and our own country was trampled on by foreign nations.²⁴⁹ As a result, if it had not been for the words of our Lord, we would have ventured to say that the end of the age had come, for many indeed thought along these lines and said so. What (our Lord) said (was), 'When you hear of wars and tumults, do not be afraid, for these things must first happen, but the end has not yet come.'²⁵⁰ We observed, however, that this war had not broken out over the whole world, and with this we also recalled the words of the blessed Paul in which he cautioned the Thessalonians about the coming of our Lord, saying that they should not be troubled by word or spirit or misleading epistle, as if it were from [276] him, alleging that the Day of the Lord had now arrived,²⁵¹ and showed (them) that the end could not come until the false Christ had been revealed.²⁵² Thus from these words of our Lord and his apostle, we realised that these things did not happen to us because it was the final age, but (that) they occurred to discipline us, because our sins had grown so great.²⁵³

²⁴⁸ Cf. Lk. 21 : 10-11 (and Matt. 24 : 6; Mk. 13 : 8).

²⁴⁹ John, metropolitan of Amid, claimed, probably in a sermon, to have seen an apocalyptic vision not long before his death on the eve of the Persian invasion of Mesopotamia in 502. Standing beside a church altar, an angel predicted the ruin of Amid as divine retribution against the city counsellors who had withheld grain from the poor during the locust plague and famine of 500-502. In earlier talks with the nobles, John had said they were 'only hoarding [grain] for the enemy'. Ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 7.3 (Hamilton-Brooks, 154f.).

²⁵⁰ Lk. 21 : 9 (cf. Matt. 24 : 6; Mk. 13 : 7).

²⁵¹ II Thess. 2 : 2.

²⁵² Cf. *ibid.* 3.

²⁵³ Ps.-Joshua here consciously rejects the apocalyptic tradition expressed in works like the *Seventh Vision of Daniel* (originally in Greek, late 5th-early 6th c.) that the world would end in the year 6000 after the creation. The date was variously calculated as 501 and 507/8 A.D. Ps.-Joshua is our principal witness for the existence of this kind of speculation in Osrhoene. It is usually assumed that the so-called *Oracle of Baalbek* was a product of this tradition. Cf. P. Alexander (ed./tr.), *The Oracle of Baalbek: the Tiburtine Sibyl in Greek Dress* (Washington, D.C., 1967), 118-120, who argues that the latest identifiable historical events in this apocalypse belong to the first year of the Persian War of 502-506 : 'And the Persians will rise up in [Anastasius'] time and trample on the cities of Oriens by the sword along with the greater number of the soldiers of the Roman empire.' *Ibid.*, 19, lines 170-173. At first sight, this broad statement takes into account the fall of Theodosiopolis-Erzerum, Amid and

On the fifth of October, a Saturday, Kawad, king of the Persians, came from the north, and he and his whole army laid siege to the city of Amid, which is with us in Mesopotamia.²⁵⁴ When Anastasius, emperor of the Romans, heard that Kawad had gathered his army, he did not want to join battle with him, so that no blood should be shed on either side.²⁵⁵ Instead, he sent him gold through Rufinus, and gave him orders that if Kawad was (still) on the border and had not yet crossed into Roman territory, he should give him the gold and send him away.²⁵⁶ However, when Rufinus reached Caesarea in Cappadocia, he heard that Kawad had ravaged Agel, Suph, Armenia, and the 'Arab'.²⁵⁷ He

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Martyropolis, along with the military operations that culminated in the Roman defeat at Opadna in August 503. Below, § 57. The oracle is uninformed about the victories that followed, hence the argument for a *terminus ante quem* of 503/4. *Oracle of Baalbek*, 41f. On ps.-Joshua's reaction to apocalyptic, see also W. Brandes, 'Anastasios ὁ δόσπος: Endzeiterwartung und Kaiserkritik in Byzanz um 500 n. Chr.', *BZ* 90 (1997), 39-41, 53. The difficulty with the received view about the date of the *Oracle of Baalbek* is that lines 173-227 of the Greek text have not been studied in detail. Some passages can easily be taken as allusions to later events, *inter alia* the violence of the circus factions, Phokas' murder of Maurice and his sons, the Sasanid general Shahin's march to Chalcedon in 615, and Herakleios' thirty-year reign (5 October 610-11 February 641). Cf. also above, pp. xx-xxi.

²⁵⁴ For the fortifications of Amid, see A. Gabriel, *Voyages archéologiques dans la Turquie orientale I* (Paris, 1940), 85-205. See further below, Appendix and Map V.

²⁵⁵ This is difficult to reconcile with Procopius' claim (*Wars* 1.7.3) that Kawad's army reached Amid 'unexpectedly' (ἀφ' ἄδιδου). Procopius is certainly wrong in view of ps.-Joshua's statements in this chapter and the negotiations that Procopius himself admits took place between Kawad and the pro-Roman satrap Theodore of Sophene at Martyropolis at *De Aedificiis* 3.2.6-7 (Dewing 189).

²⁵⁶ Cf. 'Rufinus 13', *PLRE* II 954. Ps.-Joshua is our only source on his career before 515. Kawad held Rufinus captive throughout the siege of Amid. See below, § 54.

²⁵⁷ It is evident from this that Rufinus arrived in Oriens *after* Kawad took Theodosiopolis-Erzerum and headed south for Amid. Ps.-Joshua gives the Syriac names for Agilene, Sophene, the 'Arab, and the Armenian satrapies later organised by Justinian into Armenia III and IV. For the location of the 'Arab, cf. above § 38, note 180 and Map II. Ps.-Joshua makes a peculiar lapse here, omitting Kawad's capture of Martyropolis on the march south from Theodosiopolis-Erzerum, information provided by Procopius at *De Aedificiis* 3.2.4-10. Martyropolis (previously the Armenian Neprkert, now known as Farqin, Silvan or Mayafarqin) lay in Sophene not far from the west bank of the Kallath-Nymphius river (present-day Batman Su), which marked the Sasanid-Roman frontier. Once away from Theodosiopolis-Erzerum, Kawad's army seems to have reached the headwaters of the Arsianias river and moved down its course as far west as Anzitene and, after splitting into detachments, to have gone across the passes of the Taurus as far west as Agilene (through the Illyrisis *kleisoura*) and east as far as the Qoulp torrent (through which the Saphcha *kleisoura* passes) and down the Kallath-Nymphius river. See Map II.

(therefore) left the gold in Caesarea, went to (Kawad), and told him to leave the border and take the gold. (Kawad) did not consent, but laid hold of Rufinus and ordered that he be detained. He and his whole army fought against Amid, by day and night, (using) every device²⁵⁸ of war, and built a mound²⁵⁹ against it, but the Amidenes built up the wall and increased its height.²⁶⁰ After the mound had been erected, the Persians brought up a battering-ram, and when they battered the wall violently, the new superstructure was forced loose and fell, because it had not yet settled down.²⁶¹ The Amidenes, however, dug through the

Cf. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, Fig. III and XXXIII (and also Honigmann, *Ostgrenze*, Map I, where the Saphcha *kleisoura* is placed 80 km. west of its actual location). Procopius mentions that Theodore, the pro-Roman satrap of Sophene, handed over two years' taxes and, contrary to ps.-Joshua's account, purchased the safety of 'the town [Martyropolis] and the entire country' (πόλεως τε καὶ χώρας ἀπάσης). Sophene was formally annexed to the Persian kingdom with Theodore now acting as Kawad's satrap. Anastasius is said to have recognised the indefensibility of Martyropolis and its environs, and to have forgiven Theodore for his disloyalty, even though (as it seems) this compromised the defence of the line of the upper Tigris and that of Amid, which lay c. 70 km. away to the southwest. Procopius correctly asserts that Martyropolis' circuit wall was only four feet thick and twenty feet high, 'low enough practically to leap over' (ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐσπιθῆσαι ἱκανῶς πρόχειρον), and the fortifications were not brought up to a first-class standard until the reign of Justinian, probably c. 530 when Sophene was coopted into the province of Armenia IV with its own *dux*. Procopius, *De Aedificiis* 3.2.1-14. Cf. Michael Whitby, 'Procopius' description of Martyropolis (*De Aedificiis* III. 2.10-14)', *Byzantinoslavica* 45 (1984), 177-182. For a *précis* of the early history of Martyropolis and its fortifications, see C. Mango, 'Deux Études sur Byzance et la Perse sassanide', *TM* 9 (1985), 91-95, and Figs. 1 (site plan) and 5 (gate). Cf. Gabriel, *Voyages archéologiques* I 209-221.

²⁵⁸ ⲡⲥⲁⲓⲁⲓ, σχῆμα.

²⁵⁹ ⲕⲁⲃⲓⲣⲁⲥ, lit. 'mule'.

²⁶⁰ The Amidenes raised the height of the city wall only after the mound was equal to its height. Ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 7.3 (Hamilton-Brooks, 153). On the use of mounds (*aggeres*), cf. Procopius, *Wars* 1.7.14 (λόφος) and Southern-Dixon, *Late Roman Army*, 164. Ps.-Joshua's use of 'the Amidenes' should not be taken as corroboration of Procopius' claim that there were no regular soldiers in the city (*Wars* 1.7.4). Cf. the case of Tella-Constantina, where the defenders are called 'Tellenes', but *comes* Leontius was defending the place with a large detachment of Areobindus' troops. Below, § 58. It is unknown whether the two vexillations mentioned as stationed at Amid in *Not. Dign. Or.* XXXVI 19 and 21 rode to Tella-Constantina to concentrate with the other *numeri* of the province under Olympius *dux* of Mesopotamia. The energetic defence of Amid, including the use of an *onager* (the 'striker': § 53 and nn. 286 and 287), may indicate that at least some of these soldiers stayed behind and fought. Cf. below, § 53.

²⁶¹ *Viz.* the mortar and concrete fill behind the outward-facing blocks had not sufficient time to set and dry. As Amid is surrounded by the Tigris escarpment to the south and

wall under the mound and secretly drew off into the city the earth heaped up within it, while supporting [277] it during the working with posts. (Thus) the mound was undermined and collapsed.²⁶²

As Kawad was unable to get the better of the city,²⁶³ he despatched Nu'man, king of the Tayyaye, with his whole army to go south to the territory of the Harranites.²⁶⁴ Some of the Persian army even carried their advance as far as the city (known either as) Constantina or Tella,

east, the Persians must have built the mound and directed their battering rams against the north or west face of the *enceinte*, where the slope is not so steep. Cf. Berchem, 'Recherches', 262, Fig. 2. Ps.-Zachariah indicates that the defenders dropped bundles of rushes to cushion the blows of the rams. In contrast, Procopius observes that the Amidenes broke the shafts of the battering rams by dropping long timbers across their necks, a detail omitted in the Syriac accounts. *Wars* 1.7.12. Although plausible, the story could be a 'battle-piece' *topos* describing what the defenders might have been expected to do under the circumstances. Cf. Southern-Dixon, *Late Roman Army*, 160f., for 4th c. evidence on rams (*aries*).

²⁶² The battle of the mound was fought a week or two before 19 November 502 (date of the battle of Tell-Beshmai, mentioned later in § 51). Ps.-Zachariah gives a more detailed account than ps.-Joshua about the Persian attack on the wall of Amid. The Amidenes cut a breach in the wall, dug under the mound, hauled the soil and debris into the city, and propped up the tunnel with beams. Meanwhile, the Persians laid a walkway of wooden beams along the mound toward the wall and sited armoured archers there (probably dismounted cavalry) to support the assault. The Amidenes responded by hurling strings flayed from an ox onto the walkway. These had been soaked in vetch mixed with myrrh-oil and made the walkway slippery. At the same time they set fire to the beams in the cavity below the mound. After six hours' fighting the fire below surged upward and incinerated the mound. All the while the Amidenes kept up fire against the archers. Ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 7.3 (Hamilton-Brooks, 153f.). Cf. Procopius, *Wars* 1.7.14-15 (with less detail).

²⁶³ Procopius omits all details of the next two months of the siege and puts the discovery of the water channel by which the Persians in fact got into the city 'a few days later' (*viz.* after the collapse of the mound), instead of two months later, just before the city fell on 10-13 January 503 (cf. below, § 53). There is indirect corroboration of ps.-Joshua's chronology at the beginning of ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 7.4 (where the Syriac may render a genitive absolute in the Greek original of the text that indicates a long period of fighting after the collapse of the mound): 'When Kawad and his army had been defeated in the various assaults which they made upon the city, and a large number of his soldiers had perished, his hands were weakened ...' (Hamilton-Brooks, 155). A Persian source evidently lies behind Procopius' story that the magi in Kawad's camp saw a 'sign' in the offensive behaviour of prostitutes, who stood on the fortifications and displayed their *putenda*. It was said that the city would soon 'reveal secret and hidden things', *viz.* its hidden wealth would fall into Persian hands. *Wars* 1.7.16-20.

²⁶⁴ 'Naamanes II', *PLRE* II 770. It is generally agreed that Nu'man II was with Kawad outside Amid. I. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, I (Washington, D.C., 1995), 13. Cf. § 52.

plundering, robbing, and devastating the whole region.²⁶⁵ On the nineteenth of November, Olympius, the *dux* of Tella,²⁶⁶ and Eugenius,²⁶⁷ the *dux* of Melitene,²⁶⁸ who had come down at that time, (each) went out with their army and routed any Persians that they found in the villages around Tella. After turning back to return to the city, they were told that five hundred men were located in a certain valley not very far from them. They made ready to march against them, but the Roman forces that were with them had dispersed to strip the dead. Since night had come, Olympius gave the order to light a beacon on a hill-top and sound the trumpets to gather those who had dispersed, but when the Persian *marzbans* encamped at the village of Tell-Beshmai²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵ Tella-Constantina, present-day Viranshehir. At this point, the siege of Amid had lasted perhaps four weeks (since October). It seems Kawad was anxious to keep the army active in the face of a protracted and possibly demoralising inactivity. The Persian detachment crossed into Osrhoene by the road running across the saddle between Mts. Aisouma and Izala (present-day Karaca Dagħ and Tur 'Abdin). See Map II. Cf. Dilleman, *Haute Mésopotamie*, 189, n. 5. Fig. X.

²⁶⁶ Olympius was *dux* of Mesopotamia (and not Osrhoene) in 502/3. Cf. Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5996 (Mango-Scott 224, n. 5), where the editors correct 'Olympius 14', *PLRE* II 804. As Procopius indicates, his headquarters was at Tella-Constantina. *Wars* 1.22.3 (Dewing I 202f.). In autumn 502, the provincial *numeri* billeted round Tur 'Abdin seem to have concentrated at Tella not long after news came of the Persian invasion of the Armenian satrapies. As noted above (§ 12, n. 52), ps.-Joshua's recurrent use of the name of the town where the *stratelates* or *dux* had his headquarters is devoid of administrative or technical meaning.

²⁶⁷ Cf. 'Eugenius 6', *PLRE* II 417. Eugenius had previously been *dux* of Euphratesia. Sometime between 499-502, he defeated a raiding force of Lakhmid Arabs in an engagement at Bithrapsa in Syria I. Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5990 (Mango-Scott 217 and n. 2). Thus, *duces* sometimes crossed into adjacent jurisdictions in emergencies, as Eugenius did in the present instance. Euphratesia was made a separate command from that of the *dux* of Syria in the reign of Leo I (*post* 470?). Jones, *LRE*, 609, from *Cod. Iust.* 59 (60).10.4. The latter had the task of covering the approaches to the provinces of Syria I and II, a frontier zone sometimes called 'the *limes* of Chalcis'. For formations and billets in the early 5th c., see *Not. Dign. Or.* XXXIII (Seeck 69-71).

²⁶⁸ I.e. *dux utriusque Armeniae* ('*dux* of the one and the other Armenia', viz. I and II), which were organised as a separate command from that of Pontus in the reign of Leo I (*post* 470?), several decades after the *Notitia Dignitatum* were compiled for the east, as in *Or.* XXXVIII (Seeck 83-85). For the law, see previous note.

²⁶⁹ Tell-Beshmai (in Greek, Bismideon) lies just below the foothills of Tur 'Abdin, probably commanding a good view of the 'Arab. It lies some 50 km. east-northeast of the *territorium* of Tella where the plundered villages lay. See Map II. Cf. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, Fig. XI. The mosaic inscriptions recovered near present-day Derik may belong to Tell-Beshmai. One of them, laid in 481/2, mentions the *comes* and *dux* Cyrus, who has been plausibly identified as the *dux* of Mesopotamia. C. and M.

saw the light of the fire and heard the sound of the trumpets, they made their whole army battle-ready and attacked them.²⁷⁰ The Roman cavalry turned tail when they saw that the Persians outnumbered them, but the infantry could not escape and were forced to fight.²⁷¹ They assembled and drew up in order for battle, formed what is termed a *chelone* or 'tortoise',²⁷² and fought for a long time, but since the Persian <army> outnumbered them, and was also augmented by Huns and Tayyaye, [278] the ranks of the (Romans) were broken.²⁷³ Thrown into confusion and mingled with the cavalry, they were trodden and trampled under the <hooves>²⁷⁴ of the horses of the Tayyaye. Thus many of the Romans were killed and the rest were taken captive.²⁷⁵

On the twenty-sixth of this month, Nu'man also arrived from the south and entered the territory of the Harranites.²⁷⁶ He ravaged and plundered (it), and took away captive men, cattle, and goods from the

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Mundell Mango, 'Inscriptions de la Mésopotamie du Nord', *TM* 11 (1991), 465-471, nos. 1-3.

²⁷⁰ The Roman forces had evidently pursued the Persians a great distance eastward. Olympius probably thought the Persians were too dispersed to risk a night engagement against his own scattered troops.

²⁷¹ The *Notitia Dignitatum* mentions four infantry formations billeted in Mesopotamia in the early 5th c. Unless redeployed by 503, the infantry will probably have been elements of the *legio I Parthica Nisibena* based in Tella-Constantina, the force of *limitanei* nearest to the site of the battle. *Not. Dign. Or.* XXXVI 29 (Seeck 78).

²⁷²  (خيلون) رماة, Latin *testudo*. In Vegetius 4.14, the term refers to a shed used to protect the operators of a ram while attacking a wall. Southern-Dixon, *Late Roman Army*, 162. In the sense meant by ps.-Joshua, the *chelone* was the infantry tactic of locking shields for vertical and all-round defence against missiles.

²⁷³ The Sasanid, Lakhmid and Hunnic mounted troops would first have subjected the 'tortoise' to sustained missile fire from below the hill. When this failed, they seem to have broken the Roman formation by the lance after an advance up the slope. This last task was presumably carried out by the Sasanid *clibanarii*, as Arabs and Huns (*viz.* Hephthalites) generally served as light cavalry in desert and steppe warfare. A. S. Shahbazi, 'Army I. Pre-Islamic Iran', *Encyclopaedia Iranica* II 497. Neither Procopius nor ps.-Zachariah mentions the engagement at Tell-Beshmai.

²⁷⁴ MS. 'dust'.

²⁷⁵ The Sasanid tactical manual quoted in the *Ayin-name* (mid-6th c.) gives detailed advice on how to conduct night attacks. C. A. Inostrancev, 'The Sasanian military theory', tr. L. Bogdanov, *Journal of the Carma Oriental Institute* 7 (1926), 15f. The Romans also did badly in a night battle against the Bulgars in 493. Apart from the death of the Roman commander nothing is known of its circumstances. Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicle* 31, 108.

²⁷⁶ The Lakhmids are said to have come up against Harran-Carrhae 'from the south'. This would mean that, after the battle of Tell-Beshmai (in which they took part),

whole territory of the Harranites.²⁷⁷ He even came as far as Edessa, ravaging, plundering, and taking captive all the villages. The number of people whom he led away into captivity was eighteen thousand and five hundred, not counting those who were killed and the cattle, goods, and spoil of all kinds.²⁷⁸ The reason so many people were in the villages is that it was the vintage season, when not only the villagers, but also many Harranites and Edessenes, had gone out for the vintage and were (thus) taken captive. On account of this, Edessa was shut up and placed under guard.²⁷⁹ Trenches were dug, the wall put in order, and the gates of the city blocked up with hewn stones, because they were worn out. They had been intending to renew them, and to make bolts²⁸⁰ for the sluices²⁸¹ of the river, so that no one might enter by them. Sufficient iron, however, could not be found for the work, so an order was given that every household in Edessa should provide ten pounds of iron, and when this had been done, the work was completed.²⁸² (Meanwhile,) when Eugenius realised that he could not

Nu'man rode south through the pass between Mt. Aisouma and Tur 'Abdin, round Tektek Dagħ to the east of Harran, and thence to the Balissos (present-day Balikh) river, watering his animals there and then rapidly advancing from an unexpected direction (*viz.* with the Roman provincials thinking the enemy was to the northeast in the vicinity of Tella-Constantina). If these suppositions are accurate, Nu'man would have covered c. 200 km. in 10-15 days. Map II. Cf. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, Fig. XI.

²⁷⁷ Cf. S. Lloyd and W. Brice, 'Harran', *AS* 1 (1951), 78f., 84f., 89f., 97-103, which reports fortifications mostly of Islamic date. The *territorium* is briefly described at *ibid.*, 81-84 and Plate VIIa. The West or Halab Gate appears to be of Late Roman construction. Preusser, *Nordmesopotamische Baudenkmäler*, Plate 71.

²⁷⁸ The haul of 18,500 captives will have been seen as fair return for the long ride. The price of slaves fluctuated between c. 20-30 *solidi* for adults with craft skills. Jones, *LRE*, 852. Cf. Heichelheim, 'Syria', 165f.

²⁷⁹ This measure was taken because Harran-Carrhae lay only 34 km. south-southwest of Edessa.

²⁸⁰ حقائق, मोखलो.

²⁸¹ حقائق, καταρράκται.

²⁸² The iron evidently came from household tools and fittings. Cf. the reference to iron body articles in 'Rules of Rabbula for the Monks', Canon 7, in Vööbus, *Syriac and Arabic documents*, 28. Little is known about the iron mines and prices. Its export was prohibited in the 4th c. Mines are known to have existed in the Cappadocian Taurus and near Germaniceia in Cilicia II, but their ore was of little use in the immediate crisis. Jones, *LRE* 827, 838. Heichelheim, 'Syria', 157. Iron from the latter doubtless went for weapons production at the *fabrica* in Caesarea.

engage all the Persians, he took his remaining forces and attacked their garrison at Theodosiopolis, destroying it and taking (back) the city.²⁸³

Kawad (meanwhile) was still attacking Amid, struggling and working to restore the mound which had collapsed.²⁸⁴ He ordered the Persians [279] to fill (it) up with stones and wood, and to bring materials (made) of hair, wool, or linen, make them up like food-bags or sacks, fill them with soil, and build them up on top of the mound which they had made, so that it might be swiftly raised against the wall. The Amidenes²⁸⁵ then devised a contraption which the Persians called 'the striker', because it impeded all their work and devastated them.²⁸⁶ With this contraption the Amidenes could hurl enormous stones each weighing more than three hundred pounds, and as a result the cotton covering under which the Persians sheltered was burst, and those who were standing under it were crushed.²⁸⁷ The battering ram was also

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²⁸³ Procopius mentions Anastasius' rebuilding of Theodosiopolis-Erzerum 'not much later' (οὐ πολλῷ) than its capture by Kawad in August 502. The work must have begun immediately after its recapture. A single circuit wall whose curtain rose to 30 feet was built without a ditch or outer wall (οὔτε γὰρ προτείχισμα οὔτε τάφρος αὐτῷ ἤμυνεν). Justinian is said to have added the latter. It later became the headquarters of a new command, the *magister militum per Armeniam*, which Justinian created in 528. *De Aedificiis* 3.5.4-12. Jones, *LRE*, 271 and 1124, n. 8. The configuration of the Justinianic walls can be seen in an early 18th c. print at T. Stoianovich, 'Prospective: third and fourth levels of history', *Between East and West. The Balkan and Mediterranean Worlds IV* (New Rochelle, 1995), 94. Fig. 32. The town has double walls, many square and some triangular towers, and an acropolis with at least one hexagonal tower. Other features seem to belong to later, medieval construction.

²⁸⁴ Procopius and ps.-Zachariah omit this phase of the siege from their accounts.

²⁸⁵ Builders of military machines (μαργαρίτοι) were sometimes civilians. Cf. *IGRR III* 1165 (Bostra, 274 A.D.).

²⁸⁶ ܬܒܒܗܐ (*tubbaha*, 'striker') is a Syriac word, but ps.-Joshua or his Amidean informants may have heard the Persian word *tapah* ('ruin'); cf. Wright, transl. 42, note. Persian and Turkic terminology for military equipment had a wide currency. A. D. H. Bivar, 'Cavalry equipment and tactics on the Euphrates frontier', *DOP* 26 (1972), 291. The Iranian word *khandaq* ('ditch') turns up later in Ibn Ishaq's *Sira of Muhammad*. Cf. Avestan *kan* ('dig') and *dakh(ma)* ('burial place'). H. Reichelt, *Avestan Reader* (Strasbourg, 1911). We owe this suggestion to Peter Clark. Cf. W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina* (Oxford, 1956), 36f.

²⁸⁷ The weapon in question was the *onager*, a single-armed torsion engine, also known as the *scorpio* ('scorpion') from the overhead swing of its firing arm while releasing the stone. At the siege of Amid in 359, the Romans massed their *onagers* to destroy the Persian siege towers. Southern-Dixon, *Late Roman Army*, 157-160. Ps.-Joshua's testimony about the weight of the projectiles appears to be unique.

wrecked by the continuous, incessant barrage of stones.²⁸⁸ Indeed, the Amidenes could not injure the Persians in any other way as much as by the enormous stones, because the Persians had been pouring water on the cotton covering which had been patched together²⁸⁹ many times above <the mound>, and it could be damaged neither by arrows, on account of its thickness, nor by fire, because it was wet. However, these enormous stones launched from 'the striker' shattered both the covering and the men and armaments (underneath it). Thus the Persians were vanquished, abandoned work on the mound, and considered returning to their own country, for in the three months they had been besieging (Amid), fifty thousand of them had perished in the battles that were fought daily, night and day.²⁹⁰

The Amidenes, however, became confident of their victory,²⁹¹ fell into negligence, and did not guard the wall with the care that (they had exercised) before. On the tenth of January, [280] the guards on the wall drank much wine because of the cold, and when night came, (some) fell asleep and sank into a deep slumber, while others abandoned their posts because it was raining and went down to take shelter in their houses. Whether by this ill-discipline,²⁹² as we think, or by a treacherous

²⁸⁸ On rams, see above, n. 261.

²⁸⁹ ܠܥܬܝܢ; perhaps read ܠܥܬܝܢ, 'folded' (Wright).

²⁹⁰ The Persians and their allies were supposed to have lost some 30,000 men at the siege of Amid in 359. Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 19.9.9.

²⁹¹ Ps.-Joshua omits mentioning that Kawad sent to the city some three days before its fall, asking for a payment in silver in return for abandoning the siege. It was refused by the men directing the defence, including the chief city councillor Leontius (who seems to have been at the head of the executive board), Cyrus, governor (*hegemon*) of Mesopotamia, and Zenobius the steward (whether ecclesiastical or secular is uncertain). They are said to have issued a counter-demand that Kawad reimburse the city for its loss of the year's vintage, wheat harvest and garden fruits in the *territorium*. Ps.-Zachariah of Mytilene, *HE* 7.4 (Ahrens-Krüger 106f.). Cf. 'Cyrus 5', *PLRE* II, 336. No other source reports this exchange of embassies. Cf. Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War*, 90 and n. 4. The story is at first sight inconsistent with the fact that the imperial envoy Rufinus was with Kawad during the siege. He would have been glad to hand over the gold he had left in Caesarea, but this was intended to buy peace rather than the safety of a single city. Above, § 50.

²⁹² Another story, this one about 'indiscipline', was well-known, but ps.-Joshua avoids repeating it. It concerned a thief and 'trouble-maker' called Qotranga, who used to enter and leave Amid through the 'small watercourses' (ܠܥܬܝܢ) at a point on the west side of the fortifications called the Tripyrgia or 'Three Towers'. Ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 7.4 (Hamilton-Brooks, 156). In Brooks' *CSCO* text and translation, he renders the Syriac term as 'aqueduct' (text 26, line 3), but this is not consistent with Procopius, who

plot,²⁹³ as some have said, or whether as a punishment from God,²⁹⁴ the Persians gained control of the wall of Amid (merely) with ladders, while the gates were not opened nor the wall breached.²⁹⁵ They ransacked the city and plundered its property; they also trampled on the

suggests that the 'small watercourses' were part of a sewer network by saying that the Persians got into the city at 'the mouth of an ancient underground passage' (ἐκβολὴν ὑπονόμου παλαιοῦ). The Sasanid *kanarang* (a special title normally given to the commander of the northeastern frontier facing the Hephthalites) observed his activities and followed him into the city with a detachment, getting control of one of the towers and a section of the wall (πεδατούρα). Procopius, *Wars* 1.7.20-25. Cf. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les sassanides*, 107f., n. 3; Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War*, 90, n. 50.

²⁹³ Ps.-Joshua omits the detail that the guards at this point were monks of the monastery of John of Urtaye, but is otherwise in agreement with ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 7.4 (Ahrens-Krüger 107). The latter observes that their *hegumen* was a Persian, as if to imply culpability. Ps.-Joshua casts doubt on this theory about possible 'treachery'. He quite possibly enjoyed friendly relations with the monastery and did not wish to implicate the monks in the catastrophe that followed. See next note. Theophanes and Marcellinus Comes both accept the 'treachery' thesis. *Chron.* AM 5996 (Mango-Scott 224); Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicle* 33f. The monastery of John of Urtaye lay just outside the walls. John of Ephesus later interviewed survivors about their experiences during and after the siege. 'History of the Convent of John Urtaya', *Lives of the Eastern Saints* 58 (Brooks, *PO* 19, 217-221). It is not surprising that the monks took an active part in the defence. In Canon 7 of the monastic rules of Jacob of Edessa (ob. 708), no penalty is laid on monks who are dragooned into manning stone-throwing artillery (ⲙⲓⲛⲓⲥⲧⲁⲣⲁⲓⲥ). Vööbus, *Syriac and Arabic documents*, 96.

²⁹⁴ Kawad is alleged to have had a dream-vision of Christ promising to deliver the city into his hands because of its sins. Ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 7.4 (Ahrens-Krüger 107, 110). This story also turns up in the Chronicle of Seert with a Nestorian bias. *Chronique de Séert, seconde partie* (I) 17 (Scher, *PO* 7, 132f.). Procopius puts a similar story into the mouth of an 'one of the Amidenes, an old man and priest'. *Wars* 1.7.30-31. Ps.-Joshua devalues the different prophecies by including them in this general statement as one of three possible 'causes'.

²⁹⁵ For the Persian capture of one of the towers at the Tripyrgia, see above, n. 292. Once again, ps.-Joshua passes over well-known events with little factual comment. After seizing the tower, the Persians kept their foothold throughout the night, firing out of the darkness wherever Roman torches were seen and seriously wounding the provincial governor (*hegemon*) Cyrus, who was observing the battle. At dawn, fire from the Roman-controlled towers and curtain created panic in the Persian ranks and drove the new detachments that Kawad led forward back from the walls. As in 359, the Romans seem to have massed the fire of *onagers* and *ballistae* against the captured tower. Civilians meanwhile began to pull out the stones from the ceiling vaults of its bottom story. The Persians fought their way along the *pedaturae* until they had seized five or six towers, but it took two more nights' fighting before they controlled the wall securely enough to open the west gate. Only then were they able to descend into the city. Ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 7.4 (Ahrens-Krüger 108f.). Procopius telescopes three nights' fighting into one, but is otherwise consistent. *Wars* 1.7.26-29.

consecrated elements, broke up its church service, stripped its churches, and led into captivity (all) its inhabitants except the old and the disabled, and those who were in hiding.²⁹⁶ Leaving there a garrison of three thousand men, (the rest) of them all went down to the Mount of Singara.²⁹⁷ The Persians who remained (at Amid) took out the corpses of the Amidenes, so as not to be tormented by the stench, and heaped them up in two piles outside the North Gate.²⁹⁸ The number of those they took out through the North Gate was more than eighty thousand, excluding those whom they led out alive and stoned outside the city, those whom they stabbed on the top of the mound they had made, those

²⁹⁶ Ps.-Zachariah generally agrees, but adds the detail that, after asking Kawad, a high-ranking Christian from the Persian province of Arran in the Caucasus saved the Church of the Forty Martyrs with the people who had taken refuge in it. *HE* 7.4 (Ahrens-Krüger, 109). Cf. Procopius, *Wars* 1.7.30-32, where 'an old man and priest' (ἐρεῖς, a term the historian invariably uses for 'bishop') allegedly halts the slaughter. If true, the story refers to a refugee bishop, and not John metropolitan of Amid, who died shortly before the siege began. Ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 7.3 (Hamilton-Brooks, 155). Ps.-Joshua omits this detail. Among the other pre-503 churches were the Great Church, the monastic church of John of Urtaye (outside the walls) and the *martyrion* of the Theotokos. The supposed 4th c. date of the twin-domed Nestorian monastic church in the acropolis is based on local legend. Van Berchem-Strzygowski, *Amida*, 165f., 173.

²⁹⁷ The Mount of Singara (Jabal Sinjar) is a 130 km. long massif lying in Sasanid territory southeast of Nisibis. Late Roman Singara (now under Persian control) lies on its south slope. Cf. below, §§ 55, 69. Nestorian monks had cells on its slopes later in the 6th c. *Chronique de Séert, seconde partie (II)* 61 (Scher, *PO* 13, 469f.). The Chronicle of Seert puts the captives' eventual settlement near Seleucia in Khuzistan. Ibid., *seconde partie (I)* (Scher, *PO* 7, 133). A Sasanid seal indicates that the captives were resettled at a site (variously named as Ram-Kawad and Veh-az-Amid-Kawad) on the border between Khuzistan and Fars, viz. southeastern Mesopotamia. E. Kettenhofen, 'Deportations ii. In the Parthian and Sasanian Periods', *Encyclopaedia Iranica* VII 300. Cf. Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War*, 93. Non-portable booty like columns taken from buildings, marble sun-dials and the like, were shipped down the Tigris on boats. Ps.-Zachariah fails to specify the destination of the army. *HE* 7.4 (Ahrens-Krüger, 110). The latter also puts the garrison (evidently made up of picked men) at 3,000. Procopius' figure of 1,000 is therefore suspect (*Wars* 1.7.33). The *spahbad* Glon and two *marzbans* commanded the force. Two city councillors, John bar Habhallaha and Sergius bar Zabhduni, were put in charge of the civil population. *HE* 7.5 (Ahrens-Krüger, 112; Hamilton-Brooks, 159f.). For *spahbad* (Syriac *astabid*), see below, § 59 n. 361.

²⁹⁸ The North Gate (present-day Kharpūt Gate) is still extant. It (but not the round towers) is of pre-Islamic and probably 4th c. construction. Van Berchem-Strzygowski, *Amida*, 286f., Fig. 232. Cf. above, n. 254.

they threw into the Tigris, and those who met their deaths in all the (other) ways which we cannot describe.²⁹⁹

Kawad then released Rufinus to go and tell the emperor what had happened. (Rufinus) spoke about the agonies (of Amid) in every place (he went), and as a result of these reports the cities east of the Euphrates were thrown into turmoil. (People) prepared to flee westwards, but the respected Jacob, the *periodeutes*,³⁰⁰ [281] who composed many *memre* on sections³⁰¹ of the Scriptures and *sovyatha* and songs³⁰² on the time of the locusts,³⁰³ did not neglect his duty at that time. He wrote letters

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²⁹⁹ Ps.-Zachariah concurs with the figure of c. 80,000, but differs as to the location of the dead. He also gives various details about the disposition of high-ranking captives and the plunder taken from the churches. One thing ps.-Joshua 'could not describe' was perhaps the degrading treatment given Leontius the *protobouleutes* and Cyrus the governor, whom Kawad is said to have had ordered to be dressed in rags, tied by their necks, to carry sows, and be led through the streets. Certain senior commanders in the Persian army asked Kawad to hand over one-tenth of the captives to them, arguing that the death of so many of their relatives during the siege had to be requited. The Persians then murdered the captives with a variety of techniques that none of our sources had the stomach to report. *HE* 7.4 (Ahrens-Krüger, 109-111; Hamilton-Brooks, 159f.). All sources agree that there were many survivors. Cf. Procopius, *Wars* 1.7.32.

³⁰⁰ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܩܠܝܬܐ ('periodeutes') in margin. The *periodeutes* was a cleric holding equivalent rank to a presbyter who supervised churches in the *territorium* of a city. Their functions were practically identical with those of the *chorepiskopoi* (lit. 'rural bishops'). Inscriptions attest their activity in the Syrian provinces in tasks like constructing the stoa for a church, supervising the laying of mosaics, and even constructing a tower. Their functions were eventually handed over to the village presbyters. *IGLS*, nos. 389 (Fafirtin, Syria I, 372 A.D.), 421 (Althaka, Syria I, late 5th c.), 460 (Zerzita, Syria I, 375/6 A.D.), 733 (Arsus, Cilicia II, 5th c.), 1405 (Megara, Syria II, 5th c.), 1726 (Tell Khazneh, Syria II, 562/3 A.D.), 1935 (Zeboudis?, Syria II, n.d.). G. Tchalenko, *Villages antiques de la Syrie du Nord* III (Paris, 1958), nos. 39b, 39f. Cf. H. Leclercq, 'Périodeute', *DACL* XIV 369-379. For Arabia, cf. Trombley, *HRC* II 326, 339, 352, 354, 373.

³⁰¹ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܩܠܝܬܐ ('sections').

³⁰² ܩܕܝܫܐ ܩܠܝܬܐ ('songs').

³⁰³ Jacob of Serug, who died in 521 aged 70, was an outstanding Syriac writer of the period, especially in verse. He was educated at Edessa, and by 502/3 was *periodeutes* at Haura in Serug. In 518/9 he became bishop of Batman, the principal town in Serug. For his extant *memre* ('homilies') on biblical themes, cf. A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922), pp. 151-156. For his extant *sovyatha* ('songs') and poems in other musical forms, cf. *ibid.*, p. 149; we have not been able to identify those mentioned by ps.-Joshua 'on the time of the locusts'. There is a *memra* on the desolation of Amid in *British Library MS. Add. 14588*, foll. 100r-108r (cf. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac MSS. in the British Museum*, 807) and elsewhere, but as it is unedited, it is not

of exhortation to all the cities, encouraging (people) to trust in divine salvation and not to flee.³⁰⁴

When the emperor Anastasius heard (the news), he despatched a large Roman army to spend the winter in these cities and guard them.³⁰⁵ For Kawad, however, all the booty and captives he had taken were not enough, and he was not satisfied with the huge amount of blood he had shed.³⁰⁶ On the contrary, he (again) sent envoys to the emperor with the message, 'Send me the gold, or accept war!' This was in April, but the emperor did not send the gold and instead made ready to exact retribution and avenge those who had perished. In May he sent three commanders against (Kawad), (namely) Areobindus, Patricius, and Hypatius, and many officers along with them.³⁰⁷ Areobindus came

known whether Jacob refers in it to the 'desolation' produced by the locusts as well as that produced by the Persians.

³⁰⁴ His letter to Edessa: Jacob of Serug, *Letter 20* (ed. Olinder, pp. 129-135). According to this letter, the citizens of Edessa cited Jeremiah 18 : 7-10 in support of their wish to flee. Jacob replied that this was a threat, and that threats are designed to produce repentance from evil. By contrast, the word of Christ to Abgar (§§ 5, 36, 58, 60) was a promise, and God does not retract his promises. On the problem of civil morale and flight from the zone of operations in the 6th c. wars, see F. R. Trombley, 'War and society in rural Syria', 154-209 *passim*.

³⁰⁵ The troops gave the civil population a sense of security, but must also have acted as a police force to prevent migration *en masse*. They would have arrived between late January and March 503.

³⁰⁶ This would become a *topos* during the 6th c. wars in Syria; e.g. F. R. Trombley, 'War, society and popular religion in Byzantine Anatolia (6th-13th centuries)', *Byzantine Asia Minor (6th-12th cent.)*, edd. N. Oikonomides and S. Vryonis (Athens, 1998), 100-113.

³⁰⁷ 'Areobindus 1', 'Hypatius 6', 'Patricius 14', *PLRE II* 143-145, 577-581, 840-842. Theophanes' list of officers is more complete, but their ranks and commands are not always given. *Chron.* AM 5997 (Mango-Scott, 225f. and notes). Cf. Procopius' list at *Wars* 1.8.1-3, where Celer is mistakenly included in the group that first arrived, but cf. his correction at 1.8.10: 'for Celer had not yet arrived there [viz. at Ashparin-Sifrios near Amid where Patricius and Hypatius had camped]'. Ps.-Joshua's chronology makes it clear that Celer did not appear on the scene until autumn 503 after the fiasco at Opadna. See below, § 64. Patricius was, as it seems, commander of the 'first' ('great') praesental army, Hypatius of the 'second': Πατρίκιον, στρατηλάτην τοῦ μεγάλου πραισέντου, καὶ Ὑπάτην, στρατηλάτην πραισέντου. John Malalas, *Chronographia*, 398, line 20f. Cf. *Not. Dign. Or.* V and VI (Seeck, 11-18). Cf. G. Greatrex, 'Flavius Hypatius, *quem vidit validum Parthus sensitque timendum*', *Byzantion* 66 (1996), 124f. The Goths mentioned by Procopius' and Theophanes' source may have served in formations like the *equites V, VI and IX Dalmatae*, and the palatine legions and *auxilia*. *Ibid.*, *Or.* V 36, 37; *Or.* VI 37 (early 5th c.). The arrival of the two praesental armies in the winter of 503,

down and pitched camp on the border near Dara and 'Ammudin, facing Nisibis';³⁰⁸ he had twelve thousand men.³⁰⁹ Patricius and Hypatius laid siege to Amid, (intending) to drive out the Persian garrison from there; they had (an army of) forty thousand.³¹⁰ The *hyparch*³¹¹ Appion came down at this time and stayed in Edessa in order to look after the supplies for the Roman forces with them.³¹² Since the bakers could not

followed by Celer's force the following autumn, does not entirely corroborate Procopius' statement that the mobilisation was delayed and leisurely. *Wars* 1.8.3-6.

³⁰⁸ From the 'Ammudin-Dara position, Areobindus could cover eastern Osrohoene or, if necessary, ride for Amid across western Tur 'Abdin (viz. following Dilemann's Route 1). See Map II. It depended on which invasion route Kawad would take in spring 503. Cf. Dilemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, Fig. XVIII. Procopius' supposition that the three armies were supposed to invade Persian territory at once is mistaken. *Wars* 1.8.7.

³⁰⁹ Areobindus, *magister militum per Orientem*, had the best troops with him. For the early 5th c. order of battle of this command, see *Not. Dign. Or.* VII (Seeck, 19-22). Its make-up had probably not changed much by the early 6th c. For example, the *equites III Dalmatae* remained under the *magister militum* until the reign of Justinian, when it was at length placed at the disposal of the *dux* of Phoenice Libanensis. *Ibid.*, *Or.* VII 27. Jones, *LRE*, 661. It is quite possible that the three *numeri* of *clibanarii* had been re-equipped with lighter armour and weapons by the time of the Persian War of 502-506. *Ibid.*, *Or.* VII 31, 32, 34.

³¹⁰ The concentration of three such armies was unprecedented in recent history. The total of some 52,000 men did not include the provincial troops under the *duces* of the provinces of Oriens and their Arab allies. Although they suffered defeats because of poor cooperation and dispersion, the armies stabilised the defences of northern Mesopotamia and ended its systematic depopulation. Procopius observes: 'They say that such an army was never assembled by the Romans and Persians either before or after that time.' *Wars* 1.8.4 (Dewing I 63).

³¹¹ From *hyparchos*, the Greek technical term for praetorian prefect.

³¹² A mid-6th c. procedure for organising supplies of military biscuit (*bucellum*, βουκέλλαιον) for campaign is noted at Jones, *LRE*, 673f. See next note. Appion held the title *patricius* and was newly appointed *praefectus praetorio Orientis vacans* = *agens vices praefecturae praetorianae* early in 503 to handle the supply problems of the large armies concentrating in Oriens. 'Appion 2', *PLRE* II 111f. Cf. Malalas, *Chronographia*, 398, line 22. Procopius and Theophanes shared a common source that neither has transmitted accurately. Theophanes' observation that Appion was 'second in command of the army and in charge of supplies and general supervision' raises difficulties in view of the tripartite command structure, the presence of the army of Oriens and the two praesental armies all in the zone of operations. *Chron.* AM 5997 (Mango-Scott, 226). Similarly, Procopius has it that 'the emperor stated in a written document that [Appion] was a partner in imperial power (κοινωνός τῆς βασιλείας) so that he might have authority to manage expenditures as he wished.' This seems to be merely an Atticist summary of Appion's duties as praetorian prefect *vacans*. Areobindus evidently enjoyed overall military command because of Patricius' and Hypatius' inexperience, and had Appion as his immediate subordinate. For Appion's later activities, cf. below, § 70.

make enough bread, he gave orders for wheat to be supplied to all the households in Edessa and for them to make the *boukellaton*³¹³ at their own expense. On the first occasion the Edessenes produced six hundred and thirty thousand *modii*.³¹⁴

55 When Kawad saw [282] that Areobindus' troops were few, he sent against them the army which was with him in Singara, (which consisted of) twenty thousand Persians.³¹⁵ Areobindus, however, repeatedly chased them off until they were pushed back to the gate of Nisibis, while many of those fleeing in the rout were suffocated at the gate as they pushed to get in. During July, however, the Huns and Tayyaye joined the Persians to move against (Areobindus) under the leadership of Constantine.³¹⁶ When (Areobindus) learnt of this from (his) scouts, he sent Calliopius the Aleppine to Patricius and Hypatius, saying, 'Come here and give me your help, for a large force is about to attack us.'³¹⁷ They paid no attention, however, but remained in their positions

³¹³ Latin *bucellatum*, Greek βουκέλλατον, 'soldiers' bread'. It was a less perishable substitute for bread ('biscuit') suitable for use in the zone of operations, along with salt pork, sour wine, and oil. Papyri give figures for a substantial peacetime daily portion of 3 *librae* bread, 2 *librae* meat, 2 *xestae* of wine and 1/8 *xestae* of oil. Jones, *LRE*, 628f. and 1261f., n. 44. Rations of this size did not prevail on campaign. See next note.

³¹⁴ The task of baking *bucellatum* was forced labour and as such an ἀγγαρεία or *munus sordidum*. It normally fell upon the bakers' *collegium* and wealthy landowners. The fact that the work was doled out to the citizens at large was partly a consequence of the large number of troops that had been concentrated at Edessa in the emergency. Cf. Jones, *LRE*, 629. See previous two notes.

³¹⁵ Singara (present-day Balad Sinjar) remained an important city after its cession to Persia in 363, with extensive pasture on Jabal Sinjar. The captives of Amid were temporarily settled on its slopes in January 503. § 53. Cf. Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 252. Singara's Late Roman towers, curtain wall and one gate are still in evidence. D. Oates, *Studies in the Ancient History of Northern Iraq* (London, 1968), 97-106. Figs. 8-12. Plates VII-XII. For an aerial photo, see the literature referred to below, n. 420.

³¹⁶ Cf. § 48. Many of the Huns were Hephthalite mercenaries. The presence of 'other' Huns from the Caucasus cannot be excluded. It is possible that the *marzban* of the Arran satrapy had moved into the zone of operations. The Arabs of the Lakhmid federation came up after wintering at al-Hira on the middle Euphrates. Procopius fails to mention the initial stages of the fighting between May and July, which all went to the Romans' advantage. *Wars* 1.8.8.

³¹⁷ *Viz.* Areobindus' scouts observed the Huns' and Lakhmids' junction with Persians outside Nisibis and Singara; in response, he sent for Patricius and Hypatius hoping to concentrate all the Roman forces against them, but the attack came more quickly than anticipated. This contradicts Procopius' claim that Kawad caught Areobindus by surprise. Procopius' chronology has got events out of sequence: he has Kawad 'moving against them with his whole force' (which did not occur until July 503) and Areobindus

at Amid.³¹⁸ When the Persians attacked Areobindus' troops, they were unable to withstand them, but abandoned their camp and fled to Tella and Edessa.³¹⁹ All their baggage was plundered and carried away.

(Meanwhile) the troops of Patricius and Hypatius had been building three wooden towers to scale the wall of Amid.³²⁰ When at great expense the construction of the towers had been completed, and they had been protected with iron so as not to be damaged by anything, the news reached them of what had happened on the border.³²¹ They (therefore) set fire to the towers and left there, giving chase to the Persians but not catching them.³²² One of the officers, whose name

'accordingly' encamping against him at Arzamon (*sic*) (which happened before this, in May-June 503). *Wars* 1.8.9-10. Cf. above, § 54. Patricius and Hypatius were expected, it seems, to take the highway leading across the western edge of Tur 'Abdin directly to 'Ammudin, a distance of c. 125 km. and several days' march. Cf. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, 147-162. Figs. XVII, XX. They eventually marched south, but only after they heard of Areobindus' defeat. Below, § 57. For details of Calliopius' later career, see below, § 70.

³¹⁸ Patricius and Hypatius were delayed because of a planned *coup de main* against the Persian garrison. Below, § 56.

³¹⁹ Cf. Procopius, *Wars* 1.8.11. Ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 7.5 (Hamilton-Brooks, 161). These writers make no mention of Areobindus' call for help from Patricius and Hypatius, and give the impression that the Roman armies were not far apart. Ps.-Joshua is emphatic, however, that the two generals did not break up the siege at Amid until word came of Areobindus' defeat. Below, § 57. The Persians probably did not dislodge Areobindus from the 'Ammudin-Dara position before late July (above), whereas the battle of Opadna seems not to have taken place until sometime in August 503. Below, § 57.

³²⁰ It is impossible to reconcile this with Procopius' claim that the two generals concentrated their troops at Ashparin-Sifrios (location unknown), which he puts at some 90 km. (more than 350 *stadia*) from Amid, and that Patricius and Hypatius did not wish to besiege Amid, but planned to invade Persia at once. *Wars* 1.8.7-10. Cf. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, 314 and 293, Fig. XXXVIII, who does not insist on the difficulty. On mobile towers, see the brief remarks of Southern-Dixon, *Late Roman Army*, 162f.

³²¹ The besiegers tried to break into the city by setting fire to the gate near the church of Mar Z'ura, but the assault failed after the Persians shut the gate. It was evidently not seriously damaged. Ps. Zachariah, *HE* 7.4 (Hamilton-Brooks, 160).

³²² Patricius and Hypatius at first hesitated to move to Areobindus' aid lest the labour and iron plating expended on the siege towers be wasted. They were probably hoping for a quick assault on Amid, whose defenders they outnumbered by ten to one. After the debacle at 'Ammudin, and with the small forts, villages and transhumant camps of Osrhoene east of Tella-Constantina open to Sasanid attack, they went to Areobindus' aid with part of their force. This belated manoeuvre prevented an immediate Persian advance on Tella-Constantina. Ps.-Zachariah's report at *HE* 7.5 (Hamilton-Brooks, 161) that Hypatius had gone off to join Areobindus for an attack on Nisibis is probably a misinterpretation of troop movements that ps.-Joshua describes in greater detail in § 54-

was Pharazman, and another by the name of Theodore,³²³ cunningly sent a flock of sheep to pass by near Amid while they and their troops lay in ambush. When the Persians inside Amid saw the flock, about four hundred selected men of them went out to seize it. The Romans who were lying in ambush came up and crushed them, capturing their leader alive. [283] He promised to deliver Amid to them, and Patricius and Hypatius therefore returned there, but when that *marzban* was unable to fulfil his promise, because those inside the city were not persuaded by him, the *stratelatai* ordered him to be strung up.³²⁴

57 The Persian Tayyaye advanced to the (river) Khabur, but Timostratus, the *dux* of Callinicum, went out against them [and defeated them].³²⁵ The Roman Tayyaye,³²⁶ who are called

55. Areobindus' main task was not to attack Nisibis, but to protect Patricius' and Hypatius' siege of Amid by covering the roads across Tur 'Abdin from the Dara-'Ammudin position. Areobindus, aiming at the complete destruction of the force Kawad had sent up from Singara, pursued them all the way to the gates of Nisibis. Ps.-Joshua, § 55. This is quite far from attempting a *coup de main* against the city.

³²³ 'Pharmanes 3', 'Theodorus 53', *PLRE* II, 872f., 1095. The two generals evidently left Pharazman behind with 500 men for the purpose of disputing control of Amid's *territorium* with the Persians inside the city. His aggressive patrols terrorised the enemy. On one occasion, he killed some Persians who had ventured into villages outside the fortifications and captured their animals. Ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 7.5 (Hamilton-Brooks, 161). Pharazman was evidently operating from a fortified camp concealed in the hills around Amid.

³²⁴ This is a similar but separate incident from the ambush and killing of the Persian garrison commander Glon found at ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 7.5 (Hamilton-Brooks, 161f.) and Procopius, *Wars* 1.9.5-17, for Glon held the rank of *spahbad* and cannot therefore be the *marzban* mentioned by ps.-Joshua. Procopius puts the ambush of Glon at Thilasamon, which he says lay in a hilly, wooded area some 11 km. (40 *stadia*) from Amid (not identified by Dillemann). He mentions that Roman soldiers were roaming about, raiding the villages in its *territorium*, and that the ambush was set up by a provincial acting on Patricius' behalf, who lured Glon outside the city with the promise of catching Roman troops dispersed into small groups. Ps.-Zachariah calls the site of the battle *حقلهم*, perhaps 'fold of the shepherds'. Ps.-Zachariah's figure of 400 men in Glon's force is preferable to Procopius' 200, because he got the story directly from the instigator of the ambush, a certain Gadono of Akhore. The latter was a hunter and fisherman who used to bring game to the Persian *spahbad*. Gadono manipulated Glon with false intelligence about the whereabouts of Roman foraging parties to set up the trap.

³²⁵ Timostratus was *dux* of Osrhoene. 'Timostratus', *PLRE* II, 1119f. He evidently intercepted the Lakhmids as they moved southwestward in the general direction of Harran, planning to slip past south of Resh'aina-Theodosiopolis into the gap between Tektek Dag and Jabal 'Abd al-'Aziz. See Map II. Cf. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, 106, Fig. XI. Many cavalry formations were billeted in this general area. *Not. Dign. Or.* XXXV 16-18, 23. A show of force may have persuaded the Arabs to retire, as no battle

Tha'labites,³²⁷ went towards Hirta, (the residence) of Nu'man, and came across a caravan going up to him and camels taking ?³²⁸ up to him. They attacked and destroyed them, and seized the camels, but they did not attack Hirta itself, because (its population) had gone into the inner desert.³²⁹ The entire (enemy) army of Persians, Huns,

is reported. Timostratus was probably covering the great southern bend of the Euphrates, whose towns were exposed to attack while other commanders like Romanus, the *dux* of Palaestina, were operating with their provincial *numeri* in Areobindus' force at this time. Theophanes is explicit about this. *Chron.* AM 5990 (Mango-Scott, 217). The preponderance of evidence suggests that the Lakhmids' cavalry were a lighter type than that in the Roman vexillations in the late 5th c. and were certainly not like the Sasanid *clibanarii*. Cf. the examples of pre-Islamic arms and armour illustrated in D. Nicolle, 'Arms of the Umayyad era: military technology in a time of change', *War and Society in the Eastern Mediterranean, 7th-15th Centuries*, ed. Y. Lev (Leiden, 1997), 9-73, nos. 19A-E, 36, 52A-C, 60A-E, 88, etc. The Arabic sources mention two formations with Persian names that the Sasanid kings equipped and put at the disposal of the Lakhmid kings, the Dawsar and Shahba'. The Dawsar consisted of Tanukhid Arabs, the Shahba' of Persians. The latter seem to have been *clibanarii*, to judge from their name *shahba*, 'blazing, shining, grey'. Rothstein, *Lahmiden in al-Hira*, 134-136. The word *clibanarius* probably comes from the Iranian *griwbānar*, meaning 'neck-guard wearer'. Shahbazi, 'Army I. Pre-Islamic Iran', *Encyclopaedia Iranica* II 496, the neck-guard being an important element in their heavy armour.

³²⁶ An Arab allied to the Romans and bearing the titles of *comes* and phylarch is attested in 465/6 A.D. *SEG* 43, no. 1088 (Dhakhir, Arabia).

³²⁷ Fearing the consolidation of all the Arabs of the Syrian desert under the Sasanids (or, more properly, the Lakhmid Nu'man II) after a decade of chaos, Anastasius negotiated a treaty of military cooperation with the Arab *shaykhs* Harith of the Banu Kinda and Harith b. Tha'laba not long before the outbreak of war with Persia. The latter was made king and became the first Ghassanid phylarch. In a summary of reciprocal terms that appears in the Arabic writer Ibn Habib, the Roman government promises Harith b. Tha'laba military aid if he is attacked, in return for a guarantee of non-interference in a war between itself and the Persians. These are the 'Roman Tayyaye' ps.-Joshua has in mind. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century* I 3-12. The treaty entitled Harith b. Tha'laba, among other things, to draw grain from imperial depots (*annonae foederaticae*). Jones, *LRE*, 611. Theophanes' chronology of the War of 502-506 is usually off by at least a year. His date for the treaty needs to be put back a year to 501/2 (viz. 1 September 501 to 31 August 502). *Chron.* AM 5995 (Mango-Scott, 222f. and notes). Cf. above, § 24.

³²⁸ *سنة* or *سند*. Unknown, possibly corrupt. According to Wright, 'it is evidently the name of some valuable commodity'. Brockelmann, *Lexicon*, 243 and 301: read? *سنة*, *lavsonia inermis* (name of a plant dye). Dolabani: *سند* = *سند*, 'wheat'.

³²⁹ *Viz.* instead of crossing to the east bank of the Euphrates. See Map III. Although the Lakhmid kings were pagan until the late 6th c., Hirta (Arabic al-Hira) had a Christian bishop and a 4th c. monastery, along with sedentary Arab and Christian Syrian villages nearby. Viticulture was sufficiently well developed for wine to be exported. *Chronique*

Qadishaye, and Armenians assembled again in August and advanced as far as Opadna.³³⁰ Patricius' men heard (of this) and made to go against them, but while the Romans were still on the march and had not yet drawn up in battle formation, the Persians met the vanguard and hit them.³³¹ When those who had been struck retreated, the rest of the Roman army saw that the vanguard had been hit. Fear took hold of them and they did not stand to fight, but Patricius was the first to turn tail and his entire army followed, crossing the river Euphrates and seeking safety at the city of Samosata.³³² In this battle, Nu'man, king

de Séert, Seconde partie (II) 91 (Scher, *PO* 13, 549). Rothstein, *Lahmidén in al-Hira*, 18-27, 51, 64. I. Shahid and A. Beeston, 'al-Hira', *EI* III 462f.

³³⁰ *Viz.* detachments of Persian troops and their allies had pursued Areobindus' force westward as far as Tella-Constantina. They were scattered all over the 'Arab and were now concentrated once again into a single body. Cf. above, § 55. Opadna or Apadna (present-day Tell Harzem) is c. 40 km. west of the 'Ammudin-Dara position on the road Patricius' force had taken from Amid. See Map II. Cf. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, 293. Figs. VI and XXXVIII.

³³¹ *Viz.* the Roman main body did not have time to switch from column of march to line of battle before the Persians struck. Procopius reports that the praesental armies destroyed a force of 800 Hephthalites before making contact with the Persian main body. This, and the story that Kawad's troops caught the Romans encamped by the Arzamon river cooking and eating (once again derived from a Persian source), cannot easily be reconciled with ps.-Joshua's version of events. *Wars* 1.8.13-18. One of the excerpts of the Sasanid tactical manual quoted in the *Ayin-name* (mid-6th c.) advises: 'And let the vanguards pass over even places and halt on heights, and not pass any locality without having explored the same minutely.' Elsewhere it observes that the best time to hit the enemy is when he feels satisfied, after quenching his thirst and watering his horses. Inostrancev, 'The Sasanian military theory', 14.

³³² I.e. they took the military road (Dillemann's Route 4) which runs along the southern edge of Mt. Aisouma, past Tella-Constantina, across Tektek Dagħ, and past Edessa, a distance of over 300 km. See Map II. Cf. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, 148f. Figs. XVII-XVIII. The geographical extent of the retreat and its failure to halt at the cities along the route suggests Patricius' troops had ceased to exist as a fighting force, but could be counted on at best to sit behind the important bridges at Samosata, preventing the Persians from crossing into Euphratesia. Procopius observes: 'And they say that not a man escaped from there.' *Wars* 1.8.18-19. Ps.-Joshua contradicts this, reporting that Patricius had many of the same men with him near Amid in the winter of 503/4. Cf. below, § 66 for their low morale. Samosata was the final stage on the military highway across Anatolia. It ran from Nicomedia to Caesarea in Cappadocia I where a *fabrica* for cavalry equipment existed. For 4th c. evidence on the bridges at Samosata, see F. R. Trombley, 'Ammianus Marcellinus and fourth-century warfare: a *protector's* approach to historical narrative', *The Late Roman World and its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus*, edd. J. W. Drijvers and D. Hunt (London, 1999), 23f. For the site, see V.

of the Persian Tayyaye, was wounded, while one of the Roman officers, whose name was Peter, fled to the fortress of Ashparin.³³³ When the Persians surrounded the fortress, its inhabitants were frightened of them and handed him over to them.³³⁴ The Persians took him away captive and [284] killed the soldiers who were with him, but they did not harm the inhabitants of the fortress in any way.

Kawad, king of the Persians, (now) considered coming against Areobindus at Edessa.³³⁵ The Tayy³³⁶ king Nu'man was also urging him on because of what had happened to his caravan,³³⁷ but a tribal chief from Nu'man's (city of) Hirta who was a Christian said, 'Your majesty should not trouble to go to war against Edessa, for over it there is an irrevocable declaration of Christ whom they worship, that no enemy shall ever gain control of it.'³³⁸ When Nu'man heard this, he threatened to do worse evils in Edessa than those done in Amid and spoke blasphemous words.³³⁹ Then indeed Christ exhibited a manifest

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Chapot, *La Frontière de l'Euphrate de Pompée à la conquête arabe* (Paris, 1907), 270 (map). Cf. A. Kazhdan, 'Samosata', *ODB*, 1836. 'Samosata', *PECS*, 803f.

³³³ Also known as Sifrios and Isfrios (location unknown). Cf. above, § 56, n. 320 and Map II. Dillemann conjectures it lay in the foothills at the southwest corner of Tur 'Abdin, just north of his Route 4. *Haute Mésopotamie*, 329. Figs. XI, XVII-XVIII. Nu'man and his Lakhmid force evidently joined Kawad's main body at the same time as the other ethnic contingents (Huns, Qadishaye, Armenians, Arabs, etc.). § 48, 51, 55, 57, 59, 62 and notes. Peter's force probably consisted of cavalry vexillations from Patricius' praesental army, and he would therefore have held the rank of *comes*. Cf. § 58. He probably hoped to elude the Persians by taking a different route from the rest of the army, sheltering in the fortress for a while, and later resuming his escape westward. There is no mention of Ashparin or Sifrios in *Not. Dign. Or.* XXXV-XXXVI (Osrhoene and Mesopotamia).

³³⁴ The Persians appear to have negotiated directly with the *curiales*, using a combination of terror and cajolery, a practice consistent with the recommendation of the mid-6th c. tactical manual excerpted in the *Ayin-name*. It advises the Sasanid general to subvert the defenders of fortresses by firing arrows inside the *enceinte*, with messages attached to them warning that part of the population has been bribed and is ready to surrender. Inostrancev, 'The Sasanian military theory', 16.

³³⁵ The investment of Edessa in 503 turns up as a historical digression devoid of significant detail in Procopius' account of Khusras I's invasion of Syria I and II, Euphratesia and Osrhoene in 540. *Wars* 2.13.8-11.

³³⁶ Cf. above, § 22, n. 98.

³³⁷ Cf. above, § 57.

³³⁸ The 'promise to Abgar'. Cf. §§ 5, 36, 60.

³³⁹ The 'blasphemy' was a consequence of the fact that the Lakhmid kings of al-Hira were pagan until the late 6th c. Their principal cult was to the evening star, the divinity al-Zuhra or al-'Uzzâ, who was the Arab cognate of the Greek Aphrodite. She was at

sign in him, for at the very moment he blasphemed, the injury he had suffered on his head³⁴⁰ swelled up and his whole skull became inflamed. He retired to his tent, remained in this distress for two days, and died. However, not even this sign restrained the audacity of Kawad from his evil intent. Instead, he installed a king in place of Nu'man and went off (again) to war.³⁴¹

When he reached Tella, he laid siege to it.³⁴² The Jews there planned to deliver the city to <him> and in the tower of their synagogue, which they were responsible for guarding, they dug a tunnel.³⁴³ They told the Persians about it, so that they could dig through to it (from their side) and get in by it, but this became known to *comes* Peter who was in

times the object of human sacrifice; e.g., ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 8.5 (Ahrens-Krüger, 157f.); *Chronique de Séert, seconde partie (I)* 18 (Scher, *PO* 7, 133), etc.

³⁴⁰ Cf. above, § 57.

³⁴¹ Nu'man's immediate successor was Abu Ja'fur b. Alqama, who was not a member of the Lakhmid royal family. He was evidently a politically reliable and militarily competent leader whom Kawad could count on to keep the Lakhmid *shaykhs* in the war zone. He ruled approximately A.D. 503-505, and was succeeded by al-Mundhir III (c. 505-554). Rothstein, *Lahmidin in al-Hira*, 70f., 74f., 79.

³⁴² Kawad took the military road westward to Tella. See Map II. Cf. § 54, n. 308. For archaeological details of the Late Roman site, see G. Bell, *The Churches and Monasteries of the Tur 'Abdin*, ed. M. Mundell Mango (London, 1982), 154-157. Procopius' chronology is mistaken, putting the investment of Tella in 503 *after* that of Edessa. He fails to report any military operations against the fortifications. *Wars* 2.13.8-11.

³⁴³ Procopius omits the story of the Jews of Tella. The synagogue was evidently built hard against the fortifications. The Jews of cities, like urban trades guilds (*collegia*), were often assigned a *pedatura*, that is a section of the circuit wall with its tower(s) to guard in time of siege and to keep in good repair in peacetime. On this, see Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 363. Cf. E. Popescu, *Inscriptiile grecesti si latine din secolele IV-XIII descoperite in România* (Bucharest, 1976), no. 211. This would explain the Jewish leaders' ability to act in secrecy. Anastasius seems not to have issued any laws *vis-à-vis* the Jews of the empire. Cf. Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation*, *passim*. An incident a decade earlier may have intensified the Syrian Jews' feelings of insecurity under the Christian empire. On 9 July 492, during the celebration of the Olympia at Antioch, the charioteer Calliopas accompanied a mob to the suburb of Daphne where they burned down the synagogue, plundered its service vessels and scriptures, and killed 'many people', most of whom must have been the local Jews. They then 'raised the cross' (πήξαντες ἐκέῖ τὸν τίμιον σταυρὸν ...) on the ruin and converted it into a *martyrion* of St. Leontius. Although officials were sent with a force of Goths to punish the rioters, it is unlikely that the Jews recovered their building or got compensation. John Malalas, *Chronographia*, 396, lines 4-12. It would not be surprising if the Jews of Tella-Constantina had preferred Sasanid rule.

captivity.³⁴⁴ He persuaded those guarding him to let him approach the wall, saying that he wanted to urge the Tellenes to give him various clothes and chattels of his which he had left in the city.³⁴⁵ The guards agreed and took him to (the wall), and he told the soldiers standing on [285] it to call *comes* Leontius, who at that time was guarding the city.³⁴⁶ They summoned him and the officers, and Peter spoke with them in the language of the Romans,³⁴⁷ telling them about the plot of the Jews. To keep the Persians in ignorance about the (real) matter, he asked (the officers) to give him a change of clothes.³⁴⁸ Initially, they pretended to be annoyed with him; they [then threw down] to him from the wall a change of clothes, because [in truth] he did indeed need (some) clothes to put on. Subsequently they went down from the wall and, as if they were quite unaware of the plot of the Jews and did not know that this was the place, they went round the whole wall examining its foundations, as though they were wanting to see if it needed any repairs. They did this for Peter's sake, so that the Persians would not discover that he had disclosed the matter, and therefore inflict additional hardships on him. Eventually they came to the place where the Jews were on guard, and found that it had been undermined. Inside the tower a large tunnel had been made ready by (the Jews), just as they had been told. When the Romans saw that it was there, they went out against them in great anger and combed through the whole city, slaughtering all the Jews they could find, men and women, old and

³⁴⁴ Cf. above, § 57.

³⁴⁵ For a photo of the East Gate of Tella with a horseshoe-shaped tower, in whose vicinity the negotiations perhaps took place, see Preusser, *Nordmesopotamische Baudenkmäler*, Plate 71. As at Edessa, Kawad probably encamped on the east side of the city with a view to keeping his line of retreat open. § 60.

³⁴⁶ Leontius was evidently commander (*comes* or *tribounos*) of one of the vexillations that Areobindus had left behind in Tella during his retreat from the 'Ammudin-Dara position. The references to the 'Tellenes' as defenders of the city do not, therefore, imply the absence of regular troops, *pace* Procopius, whose speech, put into the mouth of bishop Bar-Hadad and asserting that Tella was without a garrison (οὔτε στρατιωτῶν φρουράν ἔχουσα οὔτε ἄλλο τι φυλακτήριον, ἀλλὰ τοὺς οἰκήτορας μόνους, ἀνθρώπους οἰκτρούς), cannot be reconciled in any way with ps.-Joshua's report about the conversation between Peter and Leontius' soldiers. *Wars* 2.13.14. Cf. above, § 57. Olympius *dux* of Mesopotamia was with Kawad at this time. Cf. above, § 51.

³⁴⁷ ܕܠܠܝܢܐ. This could mean either Greek or Latin. The language of command in the army was Latin, but the local lingua franca, apart from Syriac, was Greek.

³⁴⁸ ܕܒܝܢܐܝܝܢ. Wright: 'a pair of trousers'; Chabot: 'binas bracas'.

young.³⁴⁹ They went on doing this for days, and only reluctantly did they stop massacring them by order of *comes* Leontius and the persuasive power of the bishop, the blessed Bar-Hadad.³⁵⁰ They guarded the city with care, night and day, while the holy Bar-Hadad would go round visiting them, praying for them and blessing them. He praised their diligence, gave them encouragement, and sprinkled holy³⁵¹ water on them and on the city wall. He also carried [286] the eucharistic bread with him on his rounds to enable them to have communion at their posts, so that on this account none of them should abandon his guard and go down from the wall. He even went out confidently to the Persian king and spoke with him and mollified him, and when Kawad saw the man's seriousness and appreciated the vigilance of the Romans, it seemed to him pointless to be doing nothing at Tella with the whole army which he had with him.³⁵² For one reason, it could not find supplies in an area that had been devastated,³⁵³ and for another, he was worried that the Roman commanders might link up and attack him together.³⁵⁴ He therefore rapidly marched towards

³⁴⁹ On the free-spirited ruthlessness with which the Green circus faction of Antioch killed the Jews of Daphne, cf. above, n. 343.

³⁵⁰ The church of Tella-Constantina was suffragan to Amid, the metropolitan see of Mesopotamia.

³⁵¹ Lit.: 'baptismal'.

³⁵² Procopius gives a different account of Bar-Hadad's embassy to Kawad. He is said to have presented the Sasanid king with wine, figs, honey and bread. *Wars* 2.13.13-15. Cf. *Wars* 1.8.11 and above, n. 346. Bishops had played an important role in the defence of cities since the 4th c. For many examples, see N. Garsoian, 'Le Rôle de l'hierarchie chrétienne', 120-122, 129f.

³⁵³ The villages had not recovered since the Persians plundered the *territorium* of Tella-Constantina in November 502. The peasantry that survived will have begun to abandon agriculture and migrate to well defended cities like Tella, notwithstanding Jacob of Serug's widely circulated letter that urged the people of Osrhoene and Mesopotamia not to migrate from the war zone. Cf. § 54. *Pace* Procopius, it is absurd and unimaginable that Kawad should have handed over his own army's supplies to Bar-Hadad when the *territorium* of Tella was in this condition. The story was a historical invention, put into circulation by Khusrau I to justify his predatory exactions from the Syrian cities during the expedition of 540, the first year of the Persian War of 540-544. *Wars* 2.13.15.

³⁵⁴ At first sight, Kawad's drive on Edessa took him deeper into the Roman defensive network of towns and fortresses linked by roads, exposing him to concentric attacks from the forces at Callinicum, Tella and Amid, and even Patricius' demoralised troops at Samosata. Kawad's army was, however, much larger than any of the isolated Roman forces on the periphery. By taking the 'central position' near Edessa, he could fend them off in turn, even while moving his army back and forth from under the walls of Edessa. See Map II. Cf. Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 250-260.

Edessa, and pitched camp for about twenty days on the river Gallab, which is also called (the river) of the Medes.³⁵⁵ The more headstrong of his troops went round the region and ravaged it.

On the sixth of September, the Edessenes flattened all the monasteries and inns which were situated adjacent to the wall, and set fire to Kephars Seleem, the village which is (also known as) Negbath.³⁵⁶ They cut down all the hedges of the surrounding parks and gardens, and felled the trees in them, and they brought in the bones of all the martyrs which were (in the churches) surrounding the city.³⁵⁷ They took weaponry up onto the wall, and made coverings of haircloth on top of the battlements.³⁵⁸ Kawad sent word to Areobindus on the ninth of the month that he should either allow his *marzban* into the city or come out to meet him on the plain, for the reason, so he said, that he wanted to make a peace-treaty with him. Secretly, however, he had told his army that if Areobindus permitted them to enter the city, they should turn round and seize the wall and (the city's) entrances until he came and got in after them; or if (Areobindus) came out to them, they should ambush [287] him, take him alive, and bring him to (Kawad).³⁵⁹ However, because Areobindus was fearful of allowing them to enter the city, he went outside to meet them, not going far from the city, but

³⁵⁵ A tributary of the Balikh river, the Gallab rises near the northwestern spur of Tektek Dag, passes 24 km. east of Edessa, then flows south through Harran. Map II. Cf. Dilleman, *Haute Mésopotamie*, Fig. XVII. The *Ayin-name* counsels the Sasanid general to encamp on wooded terrain near water supplies, leaving the plains in the hands of the enemy. Inostrancev, 'The Sasanian military theory', 16.

³⁵⁶ These places were evidently hard against the fortifications, and would have given the enemy points of refuge. The timbers and stone might otherwise have served as building material for siege engines and mounds if left intact. The location of these places cannot be determined.

³⁵⁷ The removal of martyr relics and church service vessels from suburban shrines was standard procedure in time of siege.

³⁵⁸ These were evidently awnings lashed to the battlements and erected with posts over the fighting platform to protect the defenders from missile fire. Goat's hair was considered to be fireproof. Cf. Procopius, *Wars* 2.26.29-30 (Dewing I 496f.). We doubt these were sandbags. On the other hand, the Persians did indeed fill cloth and skin bags with soil at the siege of Amid, but this was devised to facilitate rebuilding the siege mound that the Amidenes had successfully undermined. The Persians also laid cotton coverings over the siege mound. § 53. Later, at the siege of Petra in 549, they improvised sandbags to replace the battered masonry of the fortifications when no mortar and stone was on hand, filling the *silk* bags in which they had carried their rations to Colchis with sand. Ibid. 2.30.18f. In general see C. Foss, 'Fortifications', *ODB*, 798f.

³⁵⁹ The planned ambush proved too dangerous to carry out. See next note.

(only) to the church of Mar Sergius.³⁶⁰ Bawi, who was an *astabid* - that means, a Persian *magistros*³⁶¹ - came and said to Areobindus, 'If you want us to make peace, give us ten thousand pounds of gold,³⁶² and ratify with us a treaty giving us the customary gold each year.' Areobindus promised to give up to seven thousand pounds,³⁶³ but they did not agree to accept (that) and remained arguing with him from dawn until nine o'clock. Finding no opportunity (to put into effect) their deceitful plan, because of the Roman soldiers who were guarding (Areobindus), and also being afraid of going to war with Edessa on account of what had happened to Nu'man,³⁶⁴ they left Areobindus in Edessa and went to battle against Harran, while sending all the Tayyaye to Serug. Rifaya,³⁶⁵ who was in Harran, secretly came out of the city and attacked them, killing sixty of them and capturing alive the chief of the Huns.³⁶⁶ As he was a well known figure, and held in great honour by the Persian king, (the latter) promised the Harranites that he would not fight against them if they would give (the Hun) back alive. They were afraid of fighting and handed over the Hun, sending along with him as a gift fifteen hundred rams and other items.

60 The Persian Tayyaye who had been sent to Serug went right up to the river Euphrates, destroying, taking away, or plundering everything they could. Patriciolus, one of the Roman officers, and Vitalianus his son

³⁶⁰ This was evidently the *martyrion* of Sts. Sergius and Symeon located some 200 m. northeast of the fortifications. Areobindus will have left the city by either the Great Gate on the east side or the Samosata Gate on the north. Either way, the Daisan lay between him and the walls, but the *martyrion* was within easy range of *ballistae* and other artillery, which were probably massed nearby, pointed in the direction of the church. See Map IV.

³⁶¹ The term is a Syriac adaptation of the Iranian *spahbad* (from Avestan *spada*-, 'army', and *pati*-, 'leader') in the sense of the Latin *magister militum*. P. Gignoux, 'Le *spahbed* des Sassanides à l'Islam', *JSAI* 13 (1990), 1f.

³⁶² 720,000 *solidi*.

³⁶³ 504,000 *solidi*.

³⁶⁴ Cf. above, § 58.

³⁶⁵ ܪܝܦܝܐ. 'The context favours the singular' (Wright). On the *seyame* (plural marking), cf. Nöldeke, *Grammar*, § 16B-C. The name is otherwise unknown. Wright compares it to Arabic *rifi*. Nöldeke, 'Wright's edition', 685, suggested Rufinus (ܪܝܦܝܐ), perhaps the same as that in §§ 50 and 54. Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunnen*, II, 16-17, proposes ܪܝܦܝܐ = *ripensis* = *ripensis militia*, the Roman frontier troops designated *ripenses*.

³⁶⁶ I.e. the Romans were conducting a mobile defence against this Persian detachment with the cavalry force guarding Harran, which lay c. 40 km. to the southeast of Edessa. Other Roman formations may have been involved as well.

[288] came from the west at this time to join the fighting.³⁶⁷ He was <still>³⁶⁸ (full) of fearless confidence, because he had not been near to the previous events.³⁶⁹ Crossing the river, he encountered one of the Persian officers and, engaging him, destroyed all the Persians with him. He aimed to come to Edessa, but hearing from the refugees that Kawad had surrounded the city, he turned back across the river and remained at Samosata.³⁷⁰

On the seventeenth of this month,³⁷¹ a Wednesday, we saw Christ's words and promises to Abgar³⁷² being fulfilled in practice. Kawad had gathered his whole army, marched from the river Euphrates, and came and laid siege to Edessa. His camp stretched from the *martyrion* of Mar Cosmas and Mar Damian, with them camping upon all the gardens and at the church of Mar Sergius and the village of Bekin, as far as the church of the Confessors, and the width of (the camp went) as far as the descent of Serrin.³⁷³ This whole, innumerable force surrounded Edessa

³⁶⁷ Viz. between 9-17 September 503. 'Patriciolus', *PLRE* II, 837. Patriciolus was possibly *comes foederatorum*. The Syriac title ܥܡܝܬܐ given to him and Vitalian by ps.-Joshua (the same as that held by Constantine, *comes Armeniae*, at Theodosiopolis-Erzerum) is consistent with this. However, it is possible that he was a *comes* or *tribounos* of some other formation in one of the armies. Procopius mistakenly puts their arrival at the same time as that of Areobindus, Patricius and Hypatius, shortly after the fall of Amid on 10-13 January 503. *Wars* 1.8.3. Vitalian himself later rose to the rank of *comes foederatorum*. He revolted against Anastasius in 513. Except for a brief rapprochement in 514-515 (when Anastasius promoted him to *magister militum per Thraciam*), Vitalian remained in rebellion until the emperor's death in 518. He came to terms quickly with Justin I and enjoyed the highest honours in 518-520 (*magister militum praesentalis*, *consul ordinarius*, and *patricius*). Justinian is said to have had him assassinated in 520. 'Fl. Vitalianus 2', *PLRE* II 1171-1176.

³⁶⁸ Transposing ܡܡܠܚܐ from the previous sentence. Wright transposes it to the following clause.

³⁶⁹ I.e. the rout of Patricius' army now encamped at Samosata. The two men had evidently talked with demoralised soldiers in Patricius' army, which had not yet gone into winter quarters, as reported later. Cf. above, § 57, below, § 66. Samosata was a well positioned base from which fresh Roman troops could attack any Persian formations raiding the countryside of northwestern Osrhoene.

³⁷⁰ Cf. above, § 58 n. 354.

³⁷¹ 17 September 503.

³⁷² Cf. above, §§ 5, 36, 58.

³⁷³ The Church of the Confessors was founded in the archiepiscopate of Abraham (c. 345-361). It housed the relics of the 3rd c. martyrs Guria, Shmona and Habib and became the site of many reputed miracles, including the deliverance of Euphemia from the Goth. *Chron. Edessenum*, Anno 657 (Guidi, 5) (version). *Euphemia and the Goth*, 13-32 (Burkitt, 134ff.). Cf. Luther, *Chronik*, 197-199. From the present context, it

in a day, not counting the guard-stations established for it on the hills and heights.³⁷⁴ The whole plain was filled with them and all the gates of the city were open, but the Persians were unable to enter it because of the blessing of Christ.³⁷⁵ Fear overcame them and they remained at their own positions, even though nobody fought with them, from morning until about the ninth hour. Then a few people went out from the city and attacked them, killing many Persians but suffering no casualties³⁷⁶ themselves. Women carried water and took it outside the wall for the fighters to drink, and young boys pelted (the enemy) with catapults. So a few people who went out from the city drove away (the Persians) [289] and kept them away from the wall, for they had been

appears that the *martyrion* lay outside the fortifications around the north side of the city. Map IV. Luther, *Chronik*, 226f. concurs. Cf. Segal, *Edessa*, Plan I, who puts it inside the fortifications near the North or Samosata Gate. Although vedettes were posted all over the plain, the main Persian position was a gigantic semicircular arc, extending around the eastern half of the city from the Beth-Shemesh Gate in the south, along the Daisan, to the high ground north of the city.

³⁷⁴ The hills west of the city were full of caves. It is not entirely clear that the civilian population found them suitable for habitation. A cave inscription on Nimrud Dagh of October 494 indicates that, at this time, the eminence was used by Syriac-speaking monks as necropolis. Laymen also used caves in this way, as for example the woman Amea, who was perhaps a survivor of the fighting in 503. Her funerary inscription has Syriac names and other words transcribed into Greek letters (c. 513-525). E. Sachau, 'Edessenische Inschriften', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 36 (1882), 142-167, nos. 4, 9.

³⁷⁵ If the Persians had attempted to storm the Samosata or Great Gate, their charge would have been canalised as the men crowded across the bridges. The Roman artillery had undoubtedly been massed to exact maximum casualties there. It should also be remembered that a sizeable part of Areobindus' 12,000-strong veteran army (minus casualties) was in Edessa, and could successfully have engaged any Persians who got through the crush on the bridges. No trace of the letter of Christ to Abgar survives on the fortifications of Edessa. There was, however, a 10th c. inscription over one of the gates that reflects a similar spirit: 'Christ God, he who hopes in you is never confounded.' (Χρίστε ὁ Θεός, εἰς σε ἐλπίζων οὐκ ἀποτυγχάνει ποτε). H. Leclercq, 'Edesse', *DACL* IV/2 (Paris, 1921), 2106. It was common practice to leave city gates open in the face of the enemy. Other known examples come from Illyricum and Thrace: Drizipera (Europa) in Theophylact Simocatta, *Historiae* 6.5.5 (Whitby-Whitby, 165); and Thessalonica (Macedonia I), in a siege variously dated to 586 and 597. Lemerle, *Miracles de Saint Démétrius* I 153, lines 11-26. In the latter instance, the Cassandriot Gate was left open during a sortie and could not be closed after the men returned because of a mechanical fault. The Avars and Slavs were not tempted to assault the gate.

³⁷⁶ ܐܢܬܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ('only one casualty').

about as close to it as a bowshot.³⁷⁷ They withdrew and made camp beside the village of Kubbe.

Next day Areobindus went out beyond the Great Gate, and standing opposite the Persian army sent word to Kawad, 'You have now seen in (your own) experience that the city belongs neither to you nor to Anastasius, but that it is the city of Christ, who has blessed it and has stood against your forces so that they may not take control of it.' Kawad answered, 'Give me hostages³⁷⁸ (as surety) that you will not pursue me when I strike camp to depart, and send me the men you captured yesterday and the gold which you promised, and I will go away from the city.' Areobindus gave him *comes* Basil and the fourteen men who had been captured, and made an agreement with him to give him two thousand pounds of gold at <the end of> twelve days.³⁷⁹ Kawad struck camp, and went and encamped at Dahbana,³⁸⁰ but he did not wait for the agreed period,³⁸¹ but on the following day sent one of his men named Hormizd with orders to bring three hundred pounds of gold.³⁸² Areobindus gathered the nobles of the city to consider how that gold could be collected, but when they realised that Hormizd had come prematurely, they were fortified in their trust in Christ and boldly said to Areobindus, 'We should not send any gold to this deceitful man. As he has gone back on his word and not waited until the day came which you agreed with him, so he will go back and

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³⁷⁷ The Persian investment came within a few hundred yards of the fortifications. Picked soldiers must have initiated these skirmishes. It was seen as compensation for the Romans' weak numbers and memory of recent defeats. The latter, with Kawad's sudden return to Edessa and the tightness of the investment, lent no prospect for a pitched battle outside the fortifications, as happened at Dara in 530. Cf. Bury, *LRE* II 82f.

³⁷⁸ ῥήσας, ὄμηροι.

³⁷⁹ In coin 144,000 *solidi*. Basil is attested here and in 507 as *comes Orientis*. It is unknown if an interim replacement filled the position during his captivity with Kawad. He was replaced in 507 after faction fights broke out in Antioch. 'Basilius 7', *PLRE* II, 215. The tasks of the *comes* were entirely civil. This seems to have made Basil expendable. Cf. Jones, *LRE*, 105, 592f., etc. Cf. Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5997-5998 (Mango-Scott, 226f.), where the hostage 'Alypius' is actually Olympius *dux* of Mesopotamia.

³⁸⁰ Dahbana or Davana (present-day 'Ain al-'Arus), c. 54 km. south of Edessa on the Karamuk river. It had been the encampment of the *ala I Nova Diocletiana* in the early 5th c., and was therefore a suitable place for Kawad to rest his army during negotiations with Areobindus. Map II. Cf. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, 178, 186f. Fig. XXIII.

³⁸¹ ῥήσας, προθεσμία.

³⁸² In coin, 21,600 *solidi*.

play false when he gets the gold. We believe that if he makes war with us, he will again suffer ignominy, because Christ will protect his city.' Then [290] Areobindus also plucked up courage and sent word to Kawad, 'Now we know that you are not a (real) king, for a king does not give his word and then falsely go back on it. He who plays false is no king, so as you have shown your falsehood, send *comes* Basil back to me, and do whatever you are capable of doing.'³⁸³

62 Kawad was furious. He got ready for action the elephants he had with him, and with his whole camp set out and came again to do battle with Edessa, (reaching it) on the twenty-fourth of September, a Wednesday. He surrounded the city on all sides, even more thoroughly than on the previous occasion. All the gates lay open, but Areobindus had ordered the Roman soldiers not to engage him, in order that there should be no deception manifested from his side. A few of the villagers, however, who (had taken refuge) in the city, went out against him with slings and felled many of his mailed men, while suffering no losses themselves.³⁸⁴ (Kawad's) legions³⁸⁵ endeavoured to enter the

³⁸³ This was a calculated insult. There is an analogous piece of rhetoric by John of Ephesus in his account of the battle near Melitene in 576. In this instance, the Roman generals led by Justinian *magister militum per Orientem* wrote to Khusrāu I in the hope of getting him to stand and fight a disadvantageous pitched battle after his desultory raid into eastern Anatolia: 'The act you accomplished in invading our territories and burning a city is not in accordance with the rank of a king, to do a piece of mischief and beat a retreat. It would have been a disgrace for us, even we, who are but servants of an emperor, had we acted as you have: how much more it is to you, who are not merely a king but, as you account yourself, king of kings ...' Adapted from *HE* 6.9 (Payne Smith, 395f.). The king's vulnerability to taunts of this kind in the Iranian warrior ethos, along with his subsequent defeat, may explain the law he published soon after, forbidding the king to go on campaign except against another monarch. *Ibid.* (Payne Smith, 398). Cf. Theophylact Simocatta's less detailed account of the law. *Histories* 3.14.11 (Whitby-Whitby, 95). See also Michael Whitby, 'The Persian king at war', *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East*, ed. E. Dabrowa (Cracow, 1994), 227-263.

³⁸⁴ For hand-slings (*fundae*), see Southern-Dixon, *Late Roman Army*, 166. The Syriac ܠܥܠܐ, 'mailed men', refers to the Sasanid heavy cavalry, the *clibanarii*, who fought with lance and bow. *Ibid.*, 90; Bivar, 'Cavalry equipment and tactics', 275-278. Plates 4, 5, 28 and 30; M. P. Speidel, 'Catafractarii clibanarii and the rise of late Roman mailed cavalry: a gravestone from Claudiopolis in Bithynia', *Epigraphica Anatolica* 4 (1984), 151-156 = *Roman Army Studies* II (Stuttgart, 1992), 406-413.

³⁸⁵ The Hellenised Latin loanword λεγεωνες should probably be understood as infantry formations, in view of their use of the 'tortoise' formation. See next note. The Sasanid infantry (*paygan*) consisted of archers and foot. In sieges, the archers were supposed to advance firing, protected by wicker and hide shields. In contrast, the foot, who were conscripted without pay, fought with shields and spears, and were given tasks like

city, but when they got close to its gates, (drawn up in formation) like a tortoise (?)³⁸⁶ standing up from the ground, they were humiliated and beaten down and they turned back. The speed of their cavalry charge caused the slingers to get mixed up among them, but although the Persians were shooting arrows, the Huns brandishing thongs,³⁸⁷ and the Tayyaye aiming spears against them, they could not injure any of them. Like the Philistines who went up against Samson and who although numerous and armed could not kill him, while he, unarmed as he was, killed a thousand of them with the jaw-bone of an ass,³⁸⁸ so too [291] the Persians, Huns, and Tayyaye, although falling with their horses from the stones which the slingers were hurling, could not kill any of them. When they saw that they could neither get into the city nor injure the unarmed men caught up in their midst, they set alight the church of Mar Sergius, the church of the Confessors, and all the monasteries which (the Edessenens) had left intact, as well as the church in Negbath, for the citizens had also left it.

When Areobindus the *stratelates* saw the effort of the villagers, (observed) that they were not <put to shame>, and (realised) that (heavenly) aid accompanied them, on the following day he gathered all the villagers who were in Edessa to the (city) church and gave them a present of three hundred *denarii*. Kawad left Edessa, moved on to encamp on the river Euphrates, and from there sent envoys to the emperor to tell him of his coming.³⁸⁹ Meanwhile the Tayyaye who were with him crossed to the west of the river and looted, destroyed, plundered, and burned everything they could find, while a few Persian

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storming walls and digging mines. Shahbazi, 'Army I. Pre-Islamic Iran', *Encyclopaedia Iranica* II 497.

³⁸⁶ 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥. The word also means 'mound', but cf. the 'tortoise' of § 51.

³⁸⁷ 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥 (uncertain, but in all probability correct). Suggested emendations are (Nöldeke) 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥 ('kopúvat', clubs'), or (Bensly) 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥 ('axes'), or (Altheim) 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥 ('lassoes'). Cf. Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunnen*, II 17-19. The Sasanid *clibanarii* are known at times to have carried lassoes or slings with stones. Shahbazi, 'Army I. Pre-Islamic Iran', *Encyclopaedia Iranica* II 497.

³⁸⁸ Cf. Judges 15 : 9-16.

³⁸⁹ Procopius is not aware that Kawad invested Edessa *twice* in 503. *Wars* 1.8.19. Later, at *Wars* 2.13.9-11 (on Khusrau I's raid of 540 against Osrhoene), he reports that in 503 Kawad declined to attack the fortifications on the advice of the magi. As told, the story is consistent with ps.-Joshua to the extent that Kawad failed to order a general assault on the two occasions he took his army there (*viz.* 17 and 24 September 503).

cavalry went to Batnan.³⁹⁰ Because its wall was in ruins, (its people) could not withstand (the enemy) but surrendered without a fight and handed the city over to them.³⁹¹

The year 815 (= 503/4 A.D.)

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When the Roman emperor got word of what had been happening, he despatched Celer his *magistros* with a large army.³⁹² On hearing of this, Kawad marched (down) along the river Euphrates to go and stay (over the winter) in the region belonging to him called Beth Aramaye.³⁹³ As he came towards Callinicum,³⁹⁴ he sent a *marzban*

³⁹⁰ Also called Batnae and Serug, Batnan lay at an intersection of four military highways converging from Mabbug-Hierapolis and Zeugma in Euphratesia, and Edessa and Harran in Osrhoene. Map II. Cf. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, 148. Fig. XVII and XXIII.

³⁹¹ Theophanes summarises the year's campaign (erroneously dated to 504/5) with the observation that the Persians pushed 'as far as the Syrias'. In fact they got no further than the great bend of the Euphrates, the concave river line that separates Osrhoene from Euphratesia. Theophanes' source may refer to a document like *Not. Dign. Or.* XXXIII that had been obsolete for some decades. Dating from *ante* 470 (?), it puts the three Syrias under the command of a single *dux*, viz. Syria I, Syria II and Syria Euphratensis. Cf. Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5997 (Mango-Scott, 226f. and n. 6), which omits Syria Euphratensis.

³⁹² 'Celer 2', *PLRE* II 275-277. Theophanes correctly reports that Celer, as *magister officiorum*, shared the overall command with Areobindus, a relationship that ps.-Joshua fails to define (... Κέλαρα τὸν μάγιστρον ... τὴν ὅλην σχεδὸν ἐξουσίαν παρειληφότα σὺν Ἀρεοβίνδῳ τῷ στρατηγῷ). Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5998 (de Boor I 147f.; Mango-Scott, 227). In the early 6th c., this official had any number of quasi-military functions, being in charge of the arms factories (*fabricae*), the military road network (*cursus publicus*) and the duty of inspecting the *limitanei*. Jones, *LRE* 368f., 834-836. He was therefore in a position to oversee the re-equipping of Patricius' and Hypatius' praesental armies and direct the movement of supplies, a task frequently delegated to the *protectores domestici* in the *scholae* (also under his command). Ps.-Joshua uses the Latin-Greek loanword *magistros* for this office throughout. Procopius seems to have no clear idea about Celer's sharing overall command with Areobindus, naming him as simply a late-arriving colleague of Areobindus, Patricius and Hypatius. *Wars* 1.8.2; 1.8.10. Cf. 1.8.20, where he asserts that, at the time of Celer's arrival, 'no one was made commander in the war'. Cf. A. E. R. Boak, *The Master of Offices in the Later Roman and Byzantine Empires* (New York, 1919), 74-80, 89-91, etc.

³⁹³ This was the Aramaic name of the Sasanid province of Asuristan-Babylonia, the part of Mesopotamia between Tespon (viz. Ctesiphon) and the Tigris-Euphrates delta. *CHI* III/2, 748. The district had its own *marzban* at this time. *Chronique de Séert, seconde partie* (I) 14 (Scher, *PO* 7, 129). At first sight, Kawad's move to winter quarters contradicts Procopius, who explains that a 'Hunnic' attack caused the retirement from Osrhoene. *Wars* 1.8.19. The Huns in question must have been Sabirs entering the

there [292] to engage them in battle, but Timostratus the *dux* came out against him and destroyed his whole force, taking (the Persian general) alive.³⁹⁵ When Kawad (himself) reached the city, he drew up his entire army against it, threatening to destroy it and slaughter or take captive all its inhabitants if they did not hand over (the general) to him. The *dux* was cowed by the size of the Persian army and gave him up.³⁹⁶ When Celer the *magistros* reached Mabbug by the river Euphrates,³⁹⁷ and realised that Kawad had moved away from him, the wintry season had arrived, and he could not pursue him, he summoned the Roman commanders and <reprimanded>³⁹⁸ them for not listening to each other.³⁹⁹ He then assigned to them the cities in which they were to pass the winter until the campaign season came.⁴⁰⁰

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An edict came from the emperor on the twenty-fifth of December releasing all Mesopotamia from the *synteleia*.⁴⁰¹ When the Persians

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Sasanid province of Arran through the Caspian Gates. Kawad began to rebuild the fortifications of Darband against these and other generic Huns settled in the area, not earlier than 508. Cf. above § 9, note 39.

³⁹⁴ Present-day al-Raqqā. For remnants of the late Roman fortifications, see M. al-Khalaf and K. Kohlmeyer, 'Untersuchungen zu ar-Raqqā-Nikephorion/Callinicum', *DM* 2 (1985), 133-162, Fig. 2, Plate 46a and 46d. The fortress was certainly full of people from villages in the *territorium* of Callinicum. Cf. *Chronique de Séert, seconde partie* (I) 38 (Scher, *PO* 7, 197).

³⁹⁵ The scale of the victory suggests that Timostratus, *dux* of Osrhoene, had concentrated many of the provincial *numeri* with him in the fortress.

³⁹⁶ I.e. Timostratus exchanged the Persian officer for the guarantee that Kawad would abandon the siege of Callinicum. The latter then continued his retirement down the east bank of the Euphrates.

³⁹⁷ Mabbug lies about 24 km. west of the Euphrates. See Map II.

³⁹⁸ Reading 𐭪𐭣𐭥𐭩 with Wright. MS.: 𐭪𐭣𐭥𐭩 ('dismissed').

³⁹⁹ Celer's successful raid against Arzanene did not take place at this point, as Procopius suggests at *Wars* 1.8.22, but in mid- or late summer 504. Cf. below, § 79, nn. 450-453.

⁴⁰⁰ This dispersal enabled commissaries to draw supplies without excessive hardship to the rural population and prevented town dwellers and rustics alike from migrating.

⁴⁰¹ This was the first of seven such tax remission decrees. Procopius has it differently, reporting an immediate seven-year remission of *all* taxes (*viz. annona* and *capitatio*) paid annually by Amid and its *territorium*. *Wars* 1.7.35. Cf. above, § 39. Jones, *LRE*, 237 and 1113, nn. 47f. The tax remissions for Mesopotamia were renewed by yearly edict, and not decreed for a fixed seven-year term at the outset. Cf. below, § 99, n. 544. Cf. analogous tax remissions in the West because of invasion in 413-444 A.D. Jones, *LRE*, 204. Procopius seems to put the decree immediately after the fall of the city on 10-13 January 503, but ps.-Joshua's date, 25 December 503, is certainly the correct one, coming almost a year after that given by Procopius.

who were in Amid saw that the Roman army had departed,⁴⁰² they opened the city gates of Amid, went out, and entered wherever they wished, selling brass, tin, iron, tattered clothing and anything they could find in (the city) to merchants, even setting up a warehouse⁴⁰³ in it. When Patricius heard about this, he left Melitene, where he was spending the winter,⁴⁰⁴ and came and laid siege to Amid, killing all the merchants whom he found taking food and oil down to it and also those who were buying things from there. He also found and slew the Persians who had been commissioned by Kawad to bring arms, grain, and animals there, and took all they had on them. On learning of this, Kawad sent a *marzban* against him to take vengeance on him, and when they approached each other to fight, the Roman soldiers, [293] frightened by their earlier defeat,⁴⁰⁵ advised Patricius to retreat. He followed this (advice), but in their haste, not knowing where they were

⁴⁰² As will be seen, Patricius' and Hypatius' praesental armies had retired to winter quarters at Melitene. The forces they had left behind to blockade Amid seem to have abandoned their positions with the onset of winter. At this point Hypatius was recalled to Constantinople because of his inability to cooperate with Areobindus, and disappears from ps.-Joshua's narrative. Cf. Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5998 (Mango-Scott, 227). This, and not John Lydus' self-serving accusation of 'inexperience and cowardice', explains Hypatius' removal. *De Magistratibus* 3.53, ed. R. Wuensch (Leipzig, 1903), 142. He was not formally replaced until the late summer of 505, when Pharazman took command of the 'second' praesental army. The long delay was perhaps a consequence of the losses sustained at the battle of Opadna and subsequent rout (cf. above, § 57, n. 332), with the surviving vexillations consolidated into a single army under Patricius' command until brought fully up to strength. Cf. below, § 88. It is difficult to accept *PLRE* II 578, where it is said that Hypatius 'was replaced by Celer' when the latter was sharing overall command with Areobindus. Anastasius had not sent Celer merely to take over a battered praesental army. Cf. above, § 64, n. 392.

⁴⁰³ *ἄδωρε*, ἀπόθετον.

⁴⁰⁴ Patricius followed the military road east from Melitene, crossed the Euphrates, and thereafter a spur of the Taurus near lake Golcuk and the headwaters of the Tigris. Map II. Cf. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, 148. Fig. XVII (Route 1). Patricius had previously moved his demoralised praesental army from Samosata to winter quarters at Melitene, where it rested after its defeat in the battle of Opadna. Once in Melitene, it could draw replacements, re-equip and cover Armenia II, which was now an operational backwater but nevertheless bereft of its regular troops. The latter were now with Eugenius, *dux* of Armenia II, protecting the re-fortification of Theodosiopolis-Erzerum. Cf. above, § 52. On the fortifications of Melitene (present-day Eski Malatya), see Gabriel, *Voyages archéologiques* I 263-268 and Fig. 195. The surviving fortifications at Melitene are of Justinianic date. 'Melitene', *PECS*, 570.

⁴⁰⁵ *Viz.* the lost battle of Opadna in August 503, after which the army retreated in great disorder to Samosata. Cf. above, § 57.

going, they came to a river called the Kallath.⁴⁰⁶ Because it was winter and (the river) was in full flood, they could not cross it, and any one of them who tried to rush across it was drowned in the river together with his horse. When Patricius saw this, he encouraged the soldiers, saying, 'Romans, let us not disgrace our race or our military calling by fleeing from our enemies, but let us turn around and fight them, for we may have the measure of them. But even if they are too powerful for us, it is better to die by the edge of the sword with a good reputation for courage than to drown like cowards in a torrent of water.' Then the Romans, because the river gave them no choice, were persuaded by his exhortation and furiously turning against the Persians destroyed them, capturing their leaders alive.⁴⁰⁷ After this they returned and laid siege to Amid again.⁴⁰⁸ Patricius sent out word and gathered craftsmen from other cities and many villagers, and ordered them to dig in the ground and make a tunnel underneath the wall, so that it might be undermined and collapse.

In March, when the rest of the soldiers were assembling to go down with the *magistros*,⁴⁰⁹ they were given a certain sign from God to encourage them and make them confident of victory. It was made known to us by a letter from the people of the church of Zeugma,⁴¹⁰ but

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⁴⁰⁶ Kallath was the Aramaic name of the Nymphius river (present-day Batman-su), which divided the pro-Roman satrapies in Sophene from Sasanid Arzanene. See Map II. Cf. Honigmann, *Ostgrenze*, Map I. The name is not noted by Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, Fig. III. Something is missing from ps.-Joshua's narrative at this point, for it is otherwise difficult to explain Patricius' presence in Persian territory on the far side of the Kallath-Nymphius river, some 60 km. east of Amid. The intervening events can be reconstructed as follows: after destroying the Persian markets around Amid, Patricius crossed the Tigris and marched straight across Sophene to the frontier on the Kallath-Nymphius river, which he crossed, entering Sasanid Arzanene. It was evidently along this route that he encountered the Persian munitions convoys. The *marzban* in question was the military governor of either Armin (*viz.* Persarmenia) or Adurbadagan (*viz.* Azerbaijan), who came up with provincial troops.

⁴⁰⁷ The battle took place in Sasanid territory somewhere along the east bank of the Kallath-Nymphius. Although in a dangerous position with their backs to the river in full spate, Patricius and his troops destroyed the enemy force, thereby rehabilitating the reputation of the 'first' praesental army.

⁴⁰⁸ *Viz.* Patricius' army crossed to the west bank of the Kallath (probably by a bridge) and retraced its steps across Sophene, reaching the Tigris near Amid, which it began to besiege once again.

⁴⁰⁹ Celer, *magister officiorum*. Cf. above, § 64, n. 392.

⁴¹⁰ Zeugma in Euphratesia (present-day Balkis) lay on the west bank of the Euphrates opposite Apamea ad Euphratem. It was an important crossing, linked with Edessa and

lest it appear that I am saying something on my own account, or that I have been persuaded to give credence to a false report, let me put down the very words of the letter which came to us, which are as follows:

- 68 'Listen now to a miracle and an (occasion for) rejoicing (full) of praise (to God), the like of which has never occurred, because this (involves) us, [294] you, and all Romans. The event was so amazing that it is hard for the mind of creatures of flesh to believe it, but we saw it with our eyes, touched it <with our hands>,⁴¹¹ and read it with our lips. Without any scruple you ought (thus) to believe (it). On the nineteenth of March, a Friday, the day when our Saviour was killed, in the village of 'Agar,⁴¹² which is in the *chora* of Zeugma, a goose laid an egg, and on it were inscribed elegant and readable Greek characters. They formed, so to speak, the body of that egg and were embossed for [sight] and touch, like the characters which monks [inscribe] on the cups⁴¹³ of the (eucharistic) blessing, and their form was perceptible even to the blind.⁴¹⁴ They were (set out) in this manner: a cross was engraved on the side of the egg, and going all the way round the egg until it came back to the cross was written (the word) *The Romans*.⁴¹⁵ There was also another cross engraved (on it), and (right round the egg) until it got back to (the cross) was written (the word) *will conquer*.⁴¹⁶

Harran. See Map II. It was probably a stopping point for refugees fleeing the zone of operations in 502-503. Cf. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, 148, 213. Figs. XVII and XXIX (Routes 3 and 4). In general, see J. Wagner, *Seleukia am Euphrat/Zeugma* (Wiesbaden, 1976).

⁴¹¹ Reading with Chabot's conjecture. MS.: . MS.: . Cf. 1 John 1:

1.

⁴¹² Or: 'Agad.

⁴¹³ Reading uncertain. Wright and Chabot: . Martin: . Dolabani and Brockelmann, *Lexicon*, 618: read , 'communion plate'.

⁴¹⁴ Viz. the letters on the surface of the egg were in high or low relief.

⁴¹⁵ MS.: . The cross may in fact have been the Chi-Rho, the victory symbol *par excellence* of the armies of the Christian empire from the time of Constantine the Great onward. Cf. H. Leclercq, 'Chrisme', *DACL* III/1 (Paris, 1948), 1482-1534, esp. 1493-1498 (imperial usage).

⁴¹⁶ Viz. ὁ Ῥωμαῖοι νικῶσι (in the present active indicative, or, less likely, the future νικήσουσι), or perhaps the Latin *Romani victores erunt*. The verb 'conquer' turns up in many Latin and Greek phrases associated with the military victories of the Christian emperors, e.g. a lintel inscription at Edessa (early 6th c.): 'On behalf of the victory and safety of the emperor' ([ὑπὲρ νείκης καὶ σωτηρίας αὐτοκράτορος]). Transcription by V. Chapot, 'Antiquités de la Syrie du Nord', *BCH* 26 (1902), no. 53. Its letter forms (round omega, but with otherwise square uncials) are almost identical to no. 51 (Tella-

The crosses were engraved one above the other, as the words were written one above the other. No Christian or Jew seeing this miracle would stop his mouth (showing forth God's) praise,⁴¹⁷ but we are not so presumptuous as to imitate the characters which the hand of God inscribed inside the womb (of the goose), for they are very beautiful. Let anyone who hears (of this) be assured (of its truth) without doubt.' These are the words of the letter from the Zeugmatites. The egg itself was given [295] to Areobindus by those in whose village it was laid.

The Romans gathered a large army and went down and encamped by the city of Resh'aina,⁴¹⁸ while Kawad despatched about ten thousand men to attack Patricius. They entered Nisibis and remained there for rest, sending their animals to pasture on the Mount of Singara.⁴¹⁹ When the *magistros* heard of this, he sent Timostratus, *dux* of Callinicum, with six thousand cavalry, and they went and attacked those who were looking after the horses and routed them.⁴²⁰ Taking horses, flocks, and much booty, he went back to the Roman army at Resh'aina. Then all of them set out together and went and laid siege to the city of Amid with Patricius.⁴²¹

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Constantina, 513/4 A.D.). H. Leclercq, 'Nika', *DACL* XII (Paris, 1935), 1269-1272. *Idem*, 'Labarum', *DACL* VIII/1 (Paris, 1928), 954. Some think the formula 'this (cross) conquers' (τοῦτο + ικκῆ) was adapted to celebrate the ostensible Christianisation of the Syrian countryside; e.g. Trombley, *HRC* II 267, 288, 293f., 307, etc. (Syria I and II).

⁴¹⁷ Cf. Psalm 51 : 15 (17).

⁴¹⁸ Resh'aina-Theodosiopolis.

⁴¹⁹ Jabal Sinjar. See Map II. Cf. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, 148f. Figs. XVII-XVIII. For an aerial photos of the massif, see A. Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome dans le désert de Syrie II: Album* (Paris, 1934), Plate CXXI. On the site, see F. Sarre and E. Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise im Euphrat- und Tigrisgebiet* II (Berlin, 1920), 305-307.

⁴²⁰ Timostratus, with the *numeri* of Osrhoene, must have come across the steppe from Callinicum and joined Celer's army concentrating at Resh'aina-Theodosiopolis. The raiding force then certainly took Dillemann's Route 5 down the Khabur river to the frontier. The road continues across Jabal Sinjar to Singara (present-day Balad Sinjar), which lies on its south side. For an aerial photo, see Poidebard, *Trace de Rome*, Plate CLIV, with fortifications visible on the side of the town facing the massif (from c. 1000 m.); cf. also above, n. 315. The ride from Resh'aina to the outskirts of Singara is c. 180 km., assuming Timostratus kept to the roads. The operation would therefore have taken several weeks. See Map II. The route of Timostratus' march can also be followed from Poidebard, *Trace de Rome*, Plate CXL.

⁴²¹ For the route, see Map II. Cf. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, 149. Fig. XVIII.

70 In May, Calliopius the Aleppine became *hyparch*, and coming and taking up residence in Edessa, he gave the Edessenes wheat to make *boukellaton* at their own expense.⁴²² On this occasion they baked eight hundred and fifty thousand *modii* of wheat. Appion went to Alexandria in order to make *boukellaton* there also and send bread (to the army).⁴²³

71 When Patricius got under the wall of Amid by the tunnel which he had been digging, he supported it with stakes and (then) <set> fire to them. The outer side of the wall (thus) became weak and collapsed, (but) the inner (side still) stood, so he decided to (continue) digging in the tunnel and enter the city (by this means). When he had dug the tunnel right through and the Romans began to go up (through it), an Amidene woman saw them and blurted out suddenly for joy, 'Look, the Romans are coming into the city!' The Persians heard <her>, rushed at the first one who came up, and speared him. A Goth by the name of Ald⁴²⁴ went up after him. He had been made *tribounos* at Harran, and he speared three of the Persians, but no other Romans went up after him, because [296] the Persians had discovered them. When Ald realised that no one else was coming up, he took fright and turned back, but he decided to take back down with him the body of the fallen soldier, so that the Persians might not abuse it. While he was pulling

⁴²² *Viz.* Calliopius displaced Appion as praetorian prefect of Oriens *vacans* in the zone of operations, with the task of organising military bread rations there in 504-506. See above, § 54. He may be the same person as Calliopius, *comes Orientis* c. 494. As he was a resident of Aleppo-Beroia in Syria I, our Calliopius' connections with the *curiales* of the Syrian towns made him particularly suited to the task of supplying the armies. Cf. 'Calliopius 3' and 'Calliopius 5', *PLRE* II, 251f. Theophanes refers to him as the 'general in charge of expenditure' (τὸν στρατηγὸν ... τῇ τοῦ δαπανήματος ἀρχῇ), where *strategos* is simply to be understood 'praetorian prefect'. *Chron.* AM 5998 (de Boor I 148, line 5f.). Theophanes uses the same term to describe Solomon's office as praetorian prefect of Africa in 534-536 at AM 6026 (de Boor I 189, line 10), *pace* Mango-Scott, 288, who translate it as 'general'. Cf. Procopius 3.11.5 (Dewing II 102f.), where Solomon 'managed the office of *strategos*' or 'served as military administrator', *viz.* 'praetorian prefect' (ἐπετρόπευε στρατηγίαν).

⁴²³ After Calliopius' appointment, Appion briefly retained his post as a supernumerary praetorian prefect of Oriens *vacans*, with the task of organising the production of military bread (*bucellatum*) and shipping it to the zone of operations. Cf. above, § 54, 70, 77. His family contacts in the diocese of Aegyptus were doubtless the reason for this. Once this was done, he was recalled to Constantinople rather than being sent back to Mesopotamia, probably because, like Hypatius, he had failed to cooperate with Areobindus. 'Apion 2', *PLRE* II, 112. Egyptian grain traditionally supported armies on campaign in Mesopotamia, as in 359. Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 291, n. 145.

⁴²⁴ ܐܠܕ. The vocalisation of the name is uncertain.

the body and going down into the entrance of the tunnel, the Persians struck him too and wounded him.⁴²⁵ They also ran water from a large spring nearby onto it, and four of the armed soldiers who were preparing to go up were drowned there. The rest of them then fled and got out of there, and the Persians collected stones from inside the city and blocked up the tunnel. They also piled up a lot of earth above it and kept guard vigilantly all round about it, in case it should be penetrated from a different point. They dug trenches all the way round the wall on the inside and filled them with water, so that if the Romans made another tunnel, the water would drain into it, and (its existence) would become apparent.⁴²⁶ When Patricius learnt about it from a traitor who had come over to his side, he abandoned the tunnels.

One day, when the whole Roman army was at rest and peace, fighting was provoked in the following manner. A young lad was feeding the camels and asses, and one of the asses walked up to the wall as it was grazing. The boy was too frightened to go in and retrieve it, and when one of the Persians saw it, he came down from the wall by rope, intending to cut it up and take it up for food, for there was absolutely no meat in the city. However, one of the Roman soldiers, a Galilean by birth, drawing his sword and taking his shield in his left hand, rushed towards the Persian to kill him.⁴²⁷ Because he went right up to the wall, those standing on the wall hurled down a large stone and struck the Galilean, [297] and the Persian began to climb up to his place by the rope. When he reached halfway up the wall, one of the Roman officers came near, two shield-bearers going in front of him, and from between them he shot an arrow and hit the Persian, bringing him down near the Galilean. Shouting erupted from both sides, and for this reason they became agitated and rose up to do battle. All the Roman forces were tightly crowded together right round the city; forty of them were

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⁴²⁵ Ald was commander (*comes* = *tribounos*) of one of the provincial *numeri* at the disposition of Timostratus, *dux* of Osrhoene, most of whose force was now with Celer besieging Amid. His predecessor at Harran was Rifaya. Cf. above, § 59. Harran is not mentioned as a regular billet in the early 5th c. *Not. Dign. Or.* XXXV. Cf. 'Ald', *PLRE* II 54, for a different view.

⁴²⁶ Ps.-Joshua's description of the mining operation is unique. On sapping walls, see Southern-Dixon, *Late Roman Army*, 165f.

⁴²⁷ Galilee lay in Palaestina II. In the early 5th c., the *dux* of Palaestina disposed a large number of cavalry formations. This force entered the zone of operations with Romanus as *dux* around the time Areobindus arrived in May 503. Cf. § 54 and *Not. Dign. Or.* XXXIV (Seeck, 72-74).

killed and a hundred and fifty wounded, while of the Persians on the wall, only nine were observed to have died, and a few were wounded.⁴²⁸ It was difficult (for the Romans) to fight with them, especially as (the Persians) were on the top of the wall, because all the way along it they had built small huts. They took up position inside them and fought, and were not visible to those outside.⁴²⁹

73 The *magistros* and the army commanders decided, however, that it was not appropriate for them to fight with (the garrison at Amid), as victory would not be achieved by the Romans by killing them. That would not end the war, which was with all the Persians, but if Kawad was defeated, (the garrison at Amid) would (have to) give themselves up or die in their blockade. They therefore gave orders that there was to be no fighting with them, so that the strength of the army should not be dissipated by deaths or injuries among the soldiers.

74 During June, when Constantine, who had gone with the Persians,⁴³⁰ saw that the (Persian) cause had not been successful, he abandoned them, taking with him two eminent women of Amid who had been given to him by the Persian king. He travelled through the deserted wilderness with a few companions for fourteen days, night and day, and on reaching inhabited land [298] made himself known to the Roman Tayyaye. They guided him and brought him to the *kastron* called Shura,⁴³¹ and from there sent him to Edessa. When the emperor heard about his coming, he summoned him and, after (Constantine) had gone up into his presence, ordered one of the bishops to ordain him priest. (He also ordered Constantine) to go and take up residence in the city of

⁴²⁸ The figures express the proportion of casualties an attacking force was likely to take in fighting against men in fortifications. This probably explains Celer's decision to switch from assault tactics to blockade. Cf. below, § 73.

⁴²⁹ The huts were evidently shanties constructed on the firing platform of the city wall. The firing slits of the battlements were left open to the outside, allowing the Persians to fire arrows against the besiegers. Cf. below, § 76. This practice seems nowhere else attested. Cf. Southern-Dixon, *Late Roman Army*, 127-147.

⁴³⁰ Cf. §§ 48, 55.

⁴³¹ Sura in Euphratesia on the south bank of the Euphrates. In the early 5th c., it was the billet of the *legio XVI Flavia Firma*. *Not. Dign. Or.* XXXIII. 28 (Seeck, 70). For the fortified town and *castellum*, see Poidebard, *Trace de Rome*, Plate LXXIX, which gives a general view of the site, the agricultural lands round about, and its proximity to the Euphrates, and Plate LXXX, a vertical photo showing unroofed towers, the fosse and possibly a *proteichisma*. Traces of many extramural buildings are also visible. For a full description of the site, see Chapot, *Frontière de l'Euphrate*, 286-288, where Sura is described as a 'field of ruins'. Cf. Kennedy-Riley, *Rome's Desert Frontier*, 115f.

Nicaea,⁴³² keep out of his sight, and stay well away from (public) business.⁴³³

Since Kawad had gone into the bath-house (*demosion*) of Amid when he captured (the city) and experienced the benefit of bathing, the moment he went down to his own country he gave orders that baths should be built in all towns within the Persian domain. (Meanwhile) a Tayy⁴³⁴ under Persian rule, 'Adid, went over with his whole army and gave his allegiance to the Romans.⁴³⁵ During July the Romans again fought against the Persians in Amid. Gainas, the *dux* of Arabia, inflicted many casualties on them with arrows, but when his armour got too warm for him in the heat of the day and he slightly loosened his armour-belt, he was hit by arrows launched from *ballistae* in Amid and died.⁴³⁶ When the *magistros* saw that he was being damaged by besieging Amid, he led his army down to Persian territory,⁴³⁷ while

⁴³² Probable reading.

⁴³³ For source criticism cf. 'Constantinus 14', *PLRE* II, 314. Malalas' report (based on Eustathius' chronicle) that Constantine died in Persian captivity was an unconfirmed rumour that Eustathius failed to correct because he too died not long afterward. It has also been suggested that Constantine's death was confused with that of the imperial envoy and former *dux* of Mesopotamia Olympius. Cf. below, § 80.

⁴³⁴ Cf. above, § 22, n. 98.

⁴³⁵ Ps.-Joshua is our sole source for this. The correct form of the *shaykh*'s name is either 'Aziz or Yazid. The reasons for his defection are unknown. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century* I 14.

⁴³⁶ The Persians were evidently using *ballistae* captured at the fall of the city in January 503. Gainas probably succeeded Eugenius as *dux Arabiae* after the latter became *dux utriusque Armeniae*. W. Wright's supposition that 'Arabia' meant the parts around Damascus is an unnecessary construction, as is the suggestion that Gainas was *dux novi limitis Phoenices* (viz. *dux* of Phoenice Libanensis). 'Gainas 2', *PLRE* II 489. Ps.-Joshua gives clear hints, and it is generally agreed, that the provincial cavalry *numeri* of both these provinces, as well as Palaestina, were called up when Areobindus reached the zone of operations. Cf. above, § 72 n. 427; Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century* I 20f. The chronicler here departs from his practice of designating the *dux* by the name of the town where his headquarters stood. Instead, he gives the normal administrative-technical term for Gainas' command. This should be taken at face value. His force (a *moira* or *droungos*) was serving alongside one of the praesental armies.

⁴³⁷ Celer appears to have conducted a raid against Sasanid Arbayistan, to judge from a notice in Marcellinus Comes' chronicle for this year, 503/4. He took his men c. 300 km. southward through Osrhoene, from Amid to Callinicum on the Euphrates by way of road links through Tella and Resh'aina. See Map II. Cf. Dilleman, *Haute Mésopotamie*, Figs. XI, XVII. Once across the frontier, Celer's troops raided Persian farmlands, killing cattle and agriculturalists and rounding up shepherds and their flocks. He is also said to have seized some forts constructed of mud brick (*castella latere lutoque constructa*) and to

leaving Patricius at Amid.⁴³⁸ Areobindus also led his army into Persian Armenia,⁴³⁹ and destroyed ten thousand of the Armenians and Persians, taking captive thirty thousand women and children and pillaging and burning many villages. When they turned round to go back to Amid, they took a hundred and twenty thousand sheep, oxen and cattle.⁴⁴⁰ As they passed beside the city of Nisibis, the Roman soldiers lay in hiding while a few accompanying the booty drove it by.⁴⁴¹ When a *marzban* who was there saw that there were (only) a few of them, he armed his

have advanced as far as the Iron Bridge (*ad pontem Ferreum*), an unidentified site that perhaps spanned the Tigris. Celer achieved operational surprise because of the unexpected direction of his long approach march, which must have taken two weeks to execute. No engagements are reported with the Persians. *Chronicle*, 33f. (Note that the word *castella*, 'forts', should be read in the plural.) Celer's raid against Arzanene at Procopius, *Wars* 1.9.20-22 was a separate event, and took place in 505. Cf. below, § 79.

⁴³⁸ It seemed safest to leave Patricius' praesental army behind to blockade Amid. It had gained confidence by marching and fighting in 504, but was perhaps not thought sufficiently battleworthy for a deep incursion into Persian territory. The precise composition of Celer's army is unknown. The reference to Gainas *dux Arabiae* in § 74 strongly suggests that Celer drew many of his troops for this expedition from the *numeri* of Arabia and the other provinces of Oriens. Marcellinus Comes puts its strength at 2000 men. *Chronicle* 33.

⁴³⁹ Ps.-Joshua gives Areobindus full credit for this success. In contrast, Procopius makes no reference to him at all in *Wars* 1.8.21-22.

⁴⁴⁰ I.e. it was calculated that Kawad would come to terms sooner if the forces blockading Amid were used in manoeuvre warfare by bringing Persian territory under attack. The direction of Areobindus' raid can be reconstructed. After starting from Amid, he will have crossed the Tigris, passed south of Martyropolis and entered Persian Arzanene, riding round Tur 'Abdin clockwise on the Persian side of the Tigris. He then took his force back across the Tigris, making past Nisibis. Since no place names are given, it is unlikely that he attacked the Persian fortresses of Bezabhdē or Seert. After the battle of Melitene in 576, the Persian king Khusrau I took his army through Armenia Interior and Arzanene, but the Romans seem to have cut off his retreat along the north bank of the Tigris, for he turned into mountains of Kardach (Carduchia-Hakkari) and hacked a road through rock and virgin forest. John of Ephesus, *HE* 6.10 (Payne Smith, 398). Theophylact Simocatta, *Historiae* 3.14.11-3.15. 1 (Whitby-Whitby, 95). The route along the north bank of the Tigris does not seem to be mountainous. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, Figs. III (especially), IV, XVII and XVIII. Cf. Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and his Historian* (Oxford, 1988), 255. The 30,000 captives and 120,000 animals would perhaps be equivalent to the population of some 30 villages. Ps.-Joshua gives the impression that the men of these villages were all killed. The few figures we have on village sizes come from Anatolia. F. R. Trombley, 'Paganism in the Greek world at the end of antiquity', *HTR* 78 (1985), 331, n. 25.

⁴⁴¹ For a photo of the steppe between Nisibis and Tur 'Abdin, see Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, Plates I and VII. On the site, see Sarre-Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise* II 336-346.

force and went out [299] to seize (the booty) from them. They made as if to flee, and the Persians became bold and pursued them, but when they had gone a long way from their own positions, the Romans came up out of hiding and routed them. Out of about seven thousand men not a single one escaped.⁴⁴² Furthermore, Mushleq the Armenian, who (had been) under Persian rule, went over with his whole army and gave his allegiance to the Romans.⁴⁴³

The year 816 (= 504/5 A.D.)

The survivors who were left in Amid from its population, and those who had escaped the sword, were in great distress and torment on account of famine.⁴⁴⁴ The Persians feared that they would deliver the city to the Romans and (therefore) tied up all the men who were there

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⁴⁴² It must be remembered that Areobindus would have executed the raid with his most battleworthy elements (*viz.* the *numeri* directly under his command), with many of Patricius' praesental troops left behind to blockade Amid. Ps.-Joshua gives no figures, but the Roman force must have been quite large, near the 12,000 Areobindus had with him in 503. It was a task of considerable difficulty to keep the captives and animals moving and get them across the Tigris. The expedition covered c. 400 km., and must have taken at least a month to complete. Ps.-Joshua's brevity somewhat telescopes what was clearly an operational raid on a grand scale. Procopius omits it from his narrative at or before *Wars* 1.8.21.

⁴⁴³ Mushleq (موشلق) may be identical with Mushlegh, a prince of the Mamikonian family. If so, his domains lay in the parts of 'Taron and Tayk' in Persarmenia that lie opposite Roman Asthianene. Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian*, 16-18, 21f., 100. See Map II. Cf. Honigsmann, *Ostgrenze*, Map I. In 484, Mushegh fought on the side of Vahan I Mamikonian in the revolt against Peroz, as suggested by Luther, *Chronik*, 205. Lazarus of Pharp, *Armenian History*, 77, 78, 81, 83 (Sanspeur, 125-136), The pre-battle speeches given by Lazarus have a strong flavour of 'holy war'. In 504, ps.-Joshua's Mushleq evidently hoped for permanent status as a Roman ally, once he saw the war going in their favour. It is not clear whether the Armenian satrap joined forces with Areobindus during the raid or sent envoys afterward, nor is the upshot of his defection known. He presumably remained a Roman ally during the seven-year period of the truce (506-513 A.D.). Cf. below, § 98, n. 543. It is doubtful that all princes of Persarmenia defected. Cf. Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy*, 220, n. 38.

⁴⁴⁴ It is evident that there were many more people in Amid than the 80,000 dead carried out through the North Gate in January 503. Ps.-Zachariah confirms that slaughter was controlled and there were many survivors. Cf. above, § 53, nn. 296, 299. It must be remembered that, although Amid was not a large site, it served as a point of safety for villagers from the city's *territorium* and Armenian refugees pushed ahead during the Persian drive southward from Theodosiopolis-Erzerum and Martyropolis in August and September 502.

and threw them into the amphitheatre.⁴⁴⁵ Thus (the men of Amid) perished of hunger or of interminable imprisonment. (The Persian soldiers) gave some of their provisions to the women, because they committed adultery with them and needed them to grind and bake for them, but when the supply became insufficient for (the soldiers), they abandoned (the women) and left them without food. During this year none of them had anything except a daily handful of barley, and they had absolutely no meat, wine, or any other item of provision. Being greatly afraid of the Romans, they did not budge at all from their stations, instead making for themselves small ovens on the wall and bringing up hand-mills. They ground their handful of barley at their positions and baked and ate (it there).⁴⁴⁶ They also brought up big kneading-troughs and, placing them between the battlements and filling them with earth, they planted small vegetables in them and ate anything which sprouted in them.

77 To tell what the women did there will perhaps not be believed by those who come after us, (but) at the present time, [300] among those who strive to be informed about affairs, there is no one who has not heard of all that happened, however far away he may be from us. Many women met together and secretly conspired among themselves. They would go out furtively into the streets of the city at dusk or dawn, and anyone they came across whom they could overpower, whether woman, child [or] old man, they would pull indoors, kill and eat, either boiled or roasted. When it was detected by the odour of the roasting and the matter was made known to the *marzban* there, he tortured and killed many of the women and warned the rest not to do this again nor to kill anyone. He did, however, allow them to eat those who were (already) dead, and this they did quite openly. (While some) ate the flesh of dead human beings, the others gathered and ate shoes, old

⁴⁴⁵  κυνήγιον.

⁴⁴⁶ The 2,500 or so Persians left in Amid (originally about 3,000) had by this time to cover some 4.5 km. of wall, an average of one fighter per 1.8 m. of frontage, which should have worked to their advantage. The south and eastern faces of the wall were less vulnerable because of the escarpment below. This would have allowed the Persians to concentrate large numbers of troops on the west and north faces, where the danger of Roman attack was greatest because of the shallow gradient of the plateau outside the walls. The circuit wall was thus *not* thinly held. Their concentrated fire proved sufficiently dangerous to force the Romans to give up all thought of assaulting the city. See Map V. Cf. Gabriel, *Voyages archéologiques* I 92f. and Fig. 69.

soles, and other horrible things from the streets and squares. The Roman troops, however, lacked nothing. On the contrary, everything was supplied to them in its due season, for by order of the emperor it was sent down (to them) with great care. There were more things for sale in their camps than could be found in the cities, whether food, drink, shoes, or clothing. Bakers in all the cities were baking *boukellaton* and sending it to them. (This was) especially so with the Edessenes, for the citizens (there) baked in their houses six hundred and thirty thousand *modii* during this year too by order of Calliopius the *hyparch*, not counting what was baked by the villagers throughout the whole *chora* and the bakers, both foreign and native.⁴⁴⁷

During this year [301] the bishop, Mar Peter, once again went up to the emperor to persuade him to remit the *syntelesia*. The emperor reacted angrily to him and criticised him for abandoning the care of the poor at a time like this and going up to (the emperor). He said that God himself would have put it into his heart to do (such) a favour for 'the blessed city', if that were right, without human persuasion. But while the bishop was still there, the emperor despatched the reprieve for all Mesopotamia through someone else, without (Peter) being aware of it.⁴⁴⁸ He also remitted a third of the *syntelesia* to the people of Mabbug.⁴⁴⁹

The Roman officers besieging Amid were making forays into Persian territory, taking booty and captives and wreaking havoc. The Persians

⁴⁴⁷ Calliopius was still acting as praetorian prefect of Oriens *vacans* in the zone of operations. Cf. above, § 55.

⁴⁴⁸ The presence of bishops at their sees in time of war was considered essential to the maintenance of urban morale. Michael Whitby, '*Deus Nobiscum*: Christianity, warfare and morale in late antiquity', *Modus Operandi*, edd. M. Austin, J. Harries and C. Smith (London, 1998), 200f. In general: W. Liebeschuetz, 'The rise of the bishop in the Christian Roman empire and the successor kingdoms', *Electrum* 1 (1997), 113-125. Anastasius' harshness was partly a consequence of the fact that Peter's journey to Constantinople seemed publicly to question the emperor's provident concern for the welfare of the empire's citizens in Osrhoene and Mesopotamia, where tax remissions had been a matter of policy since the indiction of 500/1. Above, § 39 and 66. Below, § 92 and 99.

⁴⁴⁹ Mabbug-Hierapolis was a staging area for troops and supplies entering Osrhoene from Euphratesia and Syria I. The citizens there will have performed various *corvées* or *δραγαίαι* in connection with this, hence the tax remission for the following year, 505/6. The emperor also sponsored the construction of a new aqueduct. It was probably completed in 505, just before the tax remission took effect. Capizzi, *L'imperatore Anastasio*, 214.

withdrew before them, crossing the river Tigris, and met up there with the Persian cavalry, who were gathering to make an attack on the Romans. Thus encouraged (to stand) against them, they halted on the far side of the Tigris, but the Romans crossed after them and routed all the Persian cavalry, which consisted of about ten thousand men.⁴⁵⁰ They looted the property of all those who had fled, burned many villages, killed all the men in them of twelve years or above, and took captive the women and children.⁴⁵¹ In fact, the *magistros* had thus ordered all officers, that if any of the Roman soldiers were found sparing a male of twelve years or above, he should be executed instead of him, and whatever village they would enter, they should not leave a single house standing in it.⁴⁵² On this account he had detached some strong men from the soldiers, and also numerous villagers who joined them as they went down (into Persian territory), and after the roofs had been burnt and the fire had gone out, these people pulled down the walls. They also cut down [302] and destroyed the vineyards, olives, and all other trees.⁴⁵³ The Roman Tayyaye also crossed the Tigris in front of them, plundering, capturing, and destroying all they could find

⁴⁵⁰ This was a major action, fought in Sophene on the north bank of the Tigris. The Persian force was evidently concentrating for an attempt to raise the siege of Amid.

⁴⁵¹ Ps.-Joshua has once again telescoped events. These scorched earth tactics would not have been put into effect until the pursuit of the broken Persian cavalry reached the frontier at the Kallath-Nymphius river and crossed into Arzanene. The rule of killing all males at the age of twelve years or above was evidently in force the previous year, when Areobindus' army made its great ride round Tur 'Abdin, as the captives are named as women and children and the army is said to have killed 10,000 'Persian and Armenian [men]'. Above, § 75.

⁴⁵² Roman soldiers seem to have hesitated to kill adolescents below the age of military service in the one-sided fighting of 504/5. Ps.-Joshua is our only evidence for this.

⁴⁵³ It is clear from Procopius at *Wars* 1.8.21-22 that Celer's troops crossed the Kallath-Nymphius river into Arzanene south of Martyropolis. His description of Celer's generalship is derisory and misleading, and contains many serious omissions: 'Meanwhile the other Roman army came up; but they did nothing worthy of mention (*sic*) because no supreme commander (αὐτοκράτωρ) had been appointed for the war, but the generals, being *equal* in rank with each other, opposed each others' plans and did not wish to [concentrate] into a [single] army. But Celer, with the men under his command, crossed the Nymphius river and made a raid against Arzanene ... So they plundered the villages there and returned not much later, and the whole raid was accomplished in a short time.' Cf. above, § 64, 75.

in Persian territory.⁴⁵⁴ Since I know that you carefully examine everything, your holiness will well understand that this war was the cause of much enrichment for the Tayyaye of both sides, and that they did as they pleased in both empires.⁴⁵⁵

When Kawad saw that the Romans were destroying the region and there was no one to stop them, [he wanted] to come and meet them. He therefore sent an *astabid* to the *magistros* to [speak] about peace, along with a force of about twenty thousand.⁴⁵⁶ He sent all the eminent people whom he had taken captive from Amid, as well as Peter whom he had taken from Ashparin and Basil (who was) among the hostages he had taken from Edessa. He also sent the corpse of *dux* Olympius, who had gone down on an embassy to him and died there.⁴⁵⁷ He sent it sealed in a coffin to show that he had died of a natural death, and his servants and those who had gone down with him testified (that this was true). The *magistros* received them and sent them on to Edessa, except for the governor of Amid⁴⁵⁸ and *comes* Peter. He was very angry (with them) and wanted to put them to death, saying that it was on account of

⁴⁵⁴ It is far from clear that the Romans and their Arab allies rode round Tur 'Abdin on the Persian side of the Tigris a second time in 504/5. The lack of place names makes it difficult to estimate the depth of this penetration.

⁴⁵⁵ Hostile and 'friendly' Arabs were a constant source of affliction to the Roman provincials. Trombley, 'War and society in rural Syria', 163, 172. Cf. Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 68-77.

⁴⁵⁶ *Viz.* Celer had the authority to negotiate peace as the highest-ranking civil official present in Oriens, in association with the highest-ranking military officer Areobindus, who was the immediate superior of Patricius and Pharazman, the latter of whom would soon take over Hypatius' praesental army. Cf. below, § 88 n. 503. The Persian force presumably kept to the north bank of the Tigris during the negotiations. The Persian official was probably the *Eran-spahbad*, the general-in-chief who supervised military operations and procurement. He was frequently charged with negotiating treaties until the reign of Kawad's successor, Khusrau I. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les sassanides*, 130f. Cf. Procopius' transliteration of *spahbad* (Ἀσπέρβεδος). *Wars* 1.9.24 and above, § 59, n. 361.

⁴⁵⁷ Cf. above, §§ 57 (Peter), 61 (Basil), and 51 (Olympius). As *dux* of Mesopotamia, Olympius had been partly responsible for the defeat at Tell-Beshmai in November 502. Above, § 51. He seems not to have been cashiered. Patricius, *magister militum praesentalis*, kept his command, despite the rout at Opadna. Above, § 57. Ps-Joshua nowhere mentions the date and purpose of Olympius' mission to Kawad. The omission is at first sight a narrative lapse. He died of disease (ἐπεθνήκε νόσῳ) while in captivity. Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5998 (de Boor I 148, line 26f.).

⁴⁵⁸ *Viz.* Cyrus. Ps-Joshua again uses the locative expression '*dayyana* of Amid', referring to the provincial capital, but the correct form is 'governor of Mesopotamia' (*viz. praeses Mesopotamiae*, ὁ ἡγεμὼν τῆς Μεσσοποταμίας).

their laxity that the places they were guarding had been delivered (to the enemy).⁴⁵⁹ On this point the Persians (themselves) testified that the wall of Amid was impregnable.

The *astabid* requested and pleaded with (the *magistros*) to give him in return for those he had brought (with him) the Persians who were besieged in Amid, for even though their fear led them to keep holding out, they were nevertheless in great distress from hunger. But the *magistros* said, 'Do not mention to me the matter of these men, because [303] they are besieged in our city and are our slaves.' The *astabid* said to him, 'Then allow me to send provisions to them, for it does not reflect well on you that your slaves should die of hunger. It is easy for you to kill them whenever you wish.' (The *magistros*) said to him, 'Send (it to them)!'. The *astabid* then said, 'Swear to me, you and all the officers and army commanders who are with you, that no one will kill those whom I send.'⁴⁶⁰ They all swore to him, except Nonnosus the *dux* who was not with them by design.⁴⁶¹ The *magistros* had left him out for this very reason, that he should not be bound by any oath if it were taken.⁴⁶² The *astabid* therefore sent three hundred camels carrying sacks of bread, but arrows were also placed inside them. Nonnosus attacked them, taking (the sacks) from (the camels) and killing those who were with them. When the *astabid* complained about

⁴⁵⁹ Cyrus' fault as civil governor of Mesopotamia lay in the 'indiscipline' of the defence, viz. lapses of security that allowed persons, and eventually the Persians as well, to enter and leave the city by the sewer at the Tripyrgia unobserved. He may also have been criticised for his intransigence in the negotiations with Kawad about purchasing the city's safety and procuring the Persians' withdrawal. Cf. above, § 53 n. 292, §§ 57, 58. Peter's lax policing of civilians at Ashparin-Sifrios permitted them to negotiate directly with the Persians and expel him from the town with his troops. Anastasius considered executing the latter, notwithstanding his subsequent ruse to aid the defenders of Tella-Constantina. Cf. above, § 58.

⁴⁶⁰ Procopius' chronology is quite confused at *Wars* 1.9.1-4. He puts Patricius' second siege of Amid, which began between late December 503-March 504, (above, § 66) *after* Areobindus had returned to Constantinople in the winter of 505/6. Below, § 87. *Pace* Procopius, ps.-Joshua is emphatic that negotiations began *before* the onset of severe weather in the winter of 504/5. Below, § 81. In addition, ps.-Joshua disproves Procopius' supposition that the Persians successfully concealed their lack of provisions in Amid. Finally, although there was some risk of another Persian relief force coming up, a first such expedition had already been driven off *before* talks began. Above, § 79.

⁴⁶¹ ܠܡܬܪܥܝܬܐ (probably from Persian, cf. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, 436). Similarly below, § 97 ('negotiations'). Nonnosus (or Nonius) was probably Olympius' successor as *dux Mesopotamiae*. 'Nonius', *PLRE* II 787.

⁴⁶² Celer's disingenuousness proved wise. See below.

this and asked the *magistros* to punish the perpetrator of the deed, the *magistros* said to him, 'I do not know who did this, because of the size of the army I have, but if you know who it is and you are able to take vengeance on him, I will not stop you.' However, the *astabid* was too frightened (to pursue) this matter, and (confined himself to) persuading (him to make) peace.

Many days after (the *astabid*) pleaded (for peace), it became very cold, with a great deal of snow and ice.⁴⁶³ One by one the Roman soldiers deserted their camps, with everyone carting off any booty which had come to him to his own home, while even those who stayed and did not go off to their own homes went into Tella, Resh'aina, or Edessa to take refuge from the cold.⁴⁶⁴ When the *astabid* saw that the soldiers were becoming weak and were not (sufficiently) <resilient> to withstand [304] the severe weather, he sent (this message) to the *magistros*: 'Either make peace and let the Persians go out of Amid, or accept (the continuation of) the war.' The *magistros* ordered *comes* Justin to re-gather the army, but he could not (do it).⁴⁶⁵ When he realised that the bulk of the soldiers had dispersed away (and left) him, he made peace and allowed the Persians to go out of Amid, on condition that the deal was approved and ratified [by both] rulers; if not, the war would continue.⁴⁶⁶ When the Roman emperor heard what had happened, he ordered a store to be set up in every city, particularly Amid, to break down enmity and strengthen peace, and he sent presents and gifts to Kawad through a man by the name of Leon, and a table-service entirely of gold. The extent of the suffering, however, of those

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⁴⁶³ Cf. Procopius, *Wars* 1.9.1-2.

⁴⁶⁴ Cf. Procopius' mention of the Roman generals' anxiety that the men would soon begin to desert. *Wars* 1.9.2.

⁴⁶⁵ *Viz.* Justin pursued the deserters with a small force of reliable troops, but was unable to retrieve them, because they had scattered southward on the roads leading to Osrhoene. There is nothing about this in Procopius. Justin seems to have held the rank of *comes* in one of the palatine guard formations that had been mobilised with the praesental armies. Cf. 'Iustinus 4', *PLRE* II 648f.

⁴⁶⁶ This is the last mention of the Persians in Amid, who evacuated the city at this juncture. Celer and the son of Glon (evidently one of the *marzbans* left in Amid) negotiated the hand-over. Procopius *Wars* 1.9.4. Ps.-Zachariah gives 1,100 pounds in gold (79,200 *solidi*) as the price Celer paid for them to go. *HE* 7.5 (Hamilton-Brooks, 163). The story was well known, but ps.-Joshua fails to mention it, perhaps out of dislike at money being given to an enemy who had destroyed so much of Osrhoene and Mesopotamia. Cf. below, § 98, where he is also silent about the annual payments to the Persians agreed in the treaty.

Edessenes who took the grain (for the store) down to Amid, is known only to those who were present at the event. The majority of them died on the journey, together with their baggage animals.⁴⁶⁷

83 The virtuous John, bishop of Amid, had died before the Persians besieged (the city), and its clergy had gone up to the holy, pious, divinely-adorned, valiant and glorious Mar Flavian, patriarch of Antioch,⁴⁶⁸ (to ask) him to appoint a bishop for them. (The patriarch) treated them with honour all the time they were there, and afterwards, <when> the virtuous Nonnus, priest and steward of the church of Amid, was released from captivity, the clergy persuaded the patriarch and he made him their [305] bishop.⁴⁶⁹ After the virtuous Nonnus had received the bishopric, he sent his *chorepiskopos* Thomas⁴⁷⁰ to Constantinople to oversee the Amidenes who were there, and to request some donation from the emperor.⁴⁷¹ (The Amidenes) who were there

⁴⁶⁷ The supply column took either Dillemann's Route d'Arménie (from Edessa) or his Route de Theodosiopolis (from the south), both of them secondary roads. See Map II. The first passes across the northern slopes of Mt. Aisouma (Karaca Dag) at an altitude of over 1000 m. The latter crosses the saddle between Mt. Aisouma and Tur 'Abdin. These routes do not seem to have passed through populated areas, hence the danger of winter travel. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, Fig. XVII.

⁴⁶⁸ On ps.-Joshua's favourable attitude to Flavian, cf. above, xxvii-xxviii (and contrast that to Philoxenus/Xenaias, § 30). Flavian was patriarch of Antioch from 498 until 512, when he was deposed and replaced by the staunchly monophysite Severus. Since he was not restored to the see after Severus' deposition in 519, it is likely that by then he had either died or become too elderly to take up his former position. Cf. A. de Halleux, 'Flavien II', *DHGE* XVII (1971), 386-388.

⁴⁶⁹ John the metropolitan died shortly before the siege of Amid began in October 502. Ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 7.3 (Hamilton-Brooks, 155). The 'steward' (*oikonomos*) or chief administrator of a local church was normally a presbyter and had charge of the construction and maintenance of church buildings, collected rents on church lands, oversaw hostels, hospitals, poorhouses and orphanages, and supervised the dole. His knowledge of finance often made him a plausible candidate for the bishop's seat when it fell vacant. Cf. H. Leclercq, 'Économe', *DACL* IV/2, 1884-1886, mostly drawn from Latin canon law, but with epigraphic examples. Cf. *IGLS*, no. 2098 (Burj al-Qa'y, Phoenice Libanensis 539/40 A.D.), where two *oikonomos*-presbyters completed a building, perhaps a church. See also *IGLS*, nos. 774 (Antioch 387 A.D.) and 778 (Antioch, 420's), where *oikonomoi* supervised the laying of apse mosaics in churches. For illustrative texts, see: 'οἰκονόμος 3', Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 944.

⁴⁷⁰ It is conceivable, but by no means certain, that this Thomas is the addressee of Jacob of Serug's *Letter* 3 (ed. Olinder, p. 17). On Nonnus and Thomas, cf. Honigsmann, *Évêques et évêchés*, 100.

⁴⁷¹ The *chorepiskopos* was a subordinate of the bishop having charge of the rural churches in the city's *territorium*. There is an important local example from across the

made an agreement with him and persuaded the emperor that Thomas himself should be their bishop. The emperor acceded to their request and informed the patriarch that he should not resist them,⁴⁷² and also gave them the governor they wanted.⁴⁷³ Emperor and patriarch gave gifts⁴⁷⁴ to the church of Amid and a considerable (sum of) money for <distribution> to the poor.⁴⁷⁵ On this account, all those who were roaming around in other regions gathered there. Every day they would carry the bodies of the dead out of Amid and then receive their appointed (sum).

The imperial eunuch Urbicius, who had made large charitable donations in the district of Jerusalem and other places, also went down there and gave a *denarius* to each (inhabitant).⁴⁷⁶ From there he came

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frontier in Euphratesia. In the decade after the Persian War of 502-506, Maronius the *chorepiskopos* was active in the parts around Rusafa-Sergiopolis in Euphratesia, which lies not far south-southwest of Sura and Callinicum, in the Arab transhumant campgrounds and the settlements of Greek-Arab agriculturalists. He is commemorated as the 'relative' of archbishop Sergius of Rusafa-Sergiopolis on a lintel inscription of 517/8 that probably marked the completion of the fortress's Basilica B. *SEG* 41, nos. 1537-1538. See also E. Kirsten, 'Chorbischof', *RAC* II 1105-1114; H. Leclercq, 'Chorévêques', *DACL* III/1, 1443-1452, with epigraphic data. For an excellent series of illustrative texts, see: 'χωρεπίσκοπος', Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1536. Cf. M. Mundell Mango, 'Sergiopolis', *ODB*, 1877f.

⁴⁷² This barely hints at what must have been an unpleasant controversy between the parties of the two bishops. Ps.-Joshua seems to have favoured the original nominee Nonnus, whom he calls 'the virtuous', and to have disliked Thomas, whose subsequent role in the planning and construction of Dara-Anastasiopolis are curiously omitted. Cf. below, § 90. The incident is overlooked in the standard ecclesiastical histories of the period for its want of relevance to the christological controversies, e.g. P. Charanis, *Church and State in the Later Roman Empire: the Religious Policy of Anastasius the First* (Madison, 1939), *passim*.

⁴⁷³ 'Anonymous 80', *PLRE* II 1231.

⁴⁷⁴ MS.: 'a gift'.

⁴⁷⁵ Emperor Anastasius also financed the construction of a new church dedicated to the Forty Martyrs, which was completed in 512. He seems as well to have supplied the monies used by bishop John to build a bridge over the Tigris. The new bridge was perhaps constructed on the foundations of an earlier one built by John Sa'ora, archbishop of Amid (483/4-502), as the Qartamin chronicle of 819 indicates. Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, 116f. The damage Amid suffered during the war inspired these donations. Capizzi, *L'imperatore Anastasio*, 215f.

⁴⁷⁶ Syriac: ܐܬܬܐ ܕܐܘܪܒܝܥܝܘܣ. viz. one *solidus* (= 420 *folles* at the tariff of 498). Urbicius had served as *praepositus sacri cubiculi* under seven emperors (not continuously), and was in office until at least 491. He had acquired great wealth and must have retired from office before he travelled to Oriens in 504/5. An example of Urbicius' pieties in Jerusalem is found in Theodosius' *De Situ Terrae Sanctae* of c. 575. It reports he had an

to Edessa, and gave a *trimesion* to every woman who wished to have it, and a *drachma* to every child.⁴⁷⁷ All except a few of the women took it, whether or not they were in need.

85 During this year, after the war was over, wild animals started to attack us. Because of the large number of corpses resulting from the battles, they had developed a taste for human bodies, so when the bodies of the slain had rotted away and vanished, these animals would go right into the villages, seize children, and eat them. They would also attack solitary men on the roads and mangle them. So frightened did (people) become that during the threshing season no one in the whole *chora* would spend the night on his threshing-floor without [306] a hut, for fear of the savage beasts. However, through the help of our Lord, who at all times is concerned for us and in his mercy delivers us from all temptations,⁴⁷⁸ some of them were brought down by villagers who speared them and sent their dead bodies to Edessa, while others were captured by hunters who ensnared and brought them (here) alive.⁴⁷⁹ Every one saw (them here) and gave glory to God, who has said, 'I will

altar carved from a rock on which the mother of Christ had supposedly rested; a miracle prevented him from having it shipped to Constantinople, and so it was installed in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre instead. 'Urbicius 1', *PLRE* II, 1188-1190. His activities in Osrhoene and Mesopotamia were evidently an unplanned extension of this pilgrimage.

⁴⁷⁷ The *trimesion* (τριμίσιον, τριμήσιον or Latin *tremissis*) was a fractional denomination of the gold currency, one-third of a *solidus*. *Drachma* is here used to represent the Late Roman *miliaresion*, the largest unit of silver currency. It was tariffed at 12 to the *solidus*. After the currency reform of 498, one *miliaresion* would have had an exchange value of 140 *folles*.

⁴⁷⁸ Cf. Matt. 6 : 13.

⁴⁷⁹ Carnivorous animals were a serious problem in Osrhoene and Mesopotamia even at the best of times. *Acta S. Dometii Martyris* 6 (Van den Gheyn, 295, line 16f.). On Tur 'Abdin, see John of Ephesus, 'Addai the *chorepiskopos*', *Lives of the Eastern Saints* 8 (Brooks, *PO* 17, 128). Cf. Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 182. An infestation of wild beasts took place in the villages of Mt. Lebanon in Phoenice Libanensis between c. 442-460. Its cause is unknown. On the recommendation of St. Symeon Stylites the Elder, apotropaic cairns of stones marked with crosses were set up at the boundaries (ὅροι) of the villages and liturgies were led by the presbyters for three days. The monks of Dayr Sim'an near Telanissos in Syria I later claimed that no wild beast crossed the 'magic circles', and showed their skins to pilgrims as proof that 'God performed a great sign.' Trombley, *HRC* II 189f. On village boundaries in Mesopotamia being protected by monastic magic, see John of Ephesus, 'Abraham the recluse', *Lives of the Eastern Saints* 7 (Brooks, *PO* 17, 123f.).

put the fear and dread of you upon every animal of the earth.⁴⁸⁰ Thus although destruction, famine, plague, captivity, wild animals, and other recorded and unrecorded punishments were sent upon us on account of our sins, nevertheless in his grace he has delivered us from all of them. And through your prayer<s> he has also on account of his mercies given strength to me, inadequate (though I am), to record as best I can some of the things which happened, as a memorial for those who suffered them, and for the instruction of those coming after us, who, if they so desire, may be able to become wise by the little I have written.

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In fact, what I have left out is more than what I have recorded, for I said at the outset that I could not (cover) everything. Indeed, if the sufferings experienced by each person individually were to be recorded, a large book would not be sufficient for the lengthy narratives that would be created. But from what others are writing, you must be aware that when those who came to our assistance ostensibly as saviours⁴⁸¹ were going down and coming up, they looted us in a manner little short of enemies. They threw many poor people out of their beds and slept in them, (leaving) their owners to lie on the ground at a time of cold weather.⁴⁸² They ejected others from their houses, going in and living in them. Others' cattle [307] they led away by force as if plundering (an enemy). They stripped some people's clothing off them and took it away. They used rough treatment on others for the sake of (obtaining) anything whatever. In the streets they <denounced>⁴⁸³ and <insulted>⁴⁸⁴ others for the smallest reason. They brazenly plundered the meagre provisions which everyone had, and the stockpile belonging to a few individuals in the villages and cities.⁴⁸⁵ They attacked many

⁴⁸⁰ Gen. 9 : 2.

⁴⁸¹ Literally: 'in the name of saviours'. On the use of the Greek σωτήρ in Syria as an epithet for emperors, *magistri militum* and praetorian prefects, see cf. *IGLS*, nos. 2524 (Salamis, Syria II, 6th c.), 1809 (Adrona, Syria II, 547/8 A.D.), and implicitly in *IGLS*, no. 288 (Anasartha, Syria I, probably 594/5). Trombley, 'War and society in rural Syria', 173, 188f.

⁴⁸² What follows is a description of the behaviour of the Roman soldiery during the winter of 504/5, and possibly even before. It is difficult to say if the principal culprits were the deserters from Amid, or if the problem was more general. Cf. above, § 81. On this, see Trombley, 'War and society in rural Syria', 172.

⁴⁸³ Read ܡܠܝܬܐ with Wright. MS.: ܡܠܝܬܐ.

⁴⁸⁴ Read ܡܠܝܬܐ with Wright. MS.: ܡܠܝܬܐ ('injured').

⁴⁸⁵ The regular procedure for soldiers' acquiring their *annonae* (viz. pay in kind in the form of wheat) is set forth in a decree of Anastasius at *Cod. Iust.* 12.37.19. The decree is

on the roads. And because there were not enough shelters and inns in the city for them, they stayed with craftsmen in their stalls.⁴⁸⁶ In full view of everyone they had their way over the women in the streets and houses.⁴⁸⁷ They took oil, wood, salt, and other things for their own needs from the old women, widowed or poor, and they stopped them

undated, but, from the position it occupies in the article *De Erogatione Militaris Annonae*, it belongs in or after Arcadius' tenure as praetorian prefect of Oriens, c. 491-505. Cf. 'Arcadius 6', *PLRE* II, 131. The law repeats the provisions of at least one previous constitution (διδραξις) on abuses in the system of commuting *annonae* in kind into coin. It is in Greek and must have been issued to the praetorian prefect of Oriens. Nothing in its language suggests that it was a response to the expropriations that ps.-Joshua describes here. Cf. Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 285-291.

⁴⁸⁶ A comprehensive law of 398 specifically exempted shops (*ergasteria*) from forced billeting, but a law given by Marcian c. 450-455 suggests that the rules were often violated. The specific objection to this practice was the damage animals might inflict on the wares therein (*mercimonia*). This reflects the increasing importance of cavalry. Both decrees were repeated in the *Codex Iustinianus*. *Cod. Theod.* 7.8.5 (= *Cod. Iust.* 12.40.2.1); *Cod. Iust.* 12.40.10.6 (... *exceptis videlicet ergasteriis, quae in plateis vel angiportis esse noscuntur*). Both laws belong to the section *De Metatis et Epidemeticis*, of which most were issued to the *magister officiorum*, who apparently had the task of assigning billets to *comitatenses* while in the zone of operations. Cf. below, § 95. Celer had neglected the problem because of more pressing business elsewhere, namely the peace negotiations with the Sasanid *spahbad* at Amid. Once general terms were agreed, he departed for Constantinople immediately. Cf. below, § 87. The rules for billets are clearly defined in imperial decrees dating back to the 4th c. See especially Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 297-304. Cf. Jones, *LRE*, 630-632. The many existing inns were insufficient to accommodate the large army concentrated around Edessa. It is not an accident that the epigraphy of Osrhoene and Mesopotamia mentions so many inns, both urban and rural, for Osrhoene was full of transit routes of armies and traders alike, particularly in the 'Arab; e.g. *Acta S. Dometii Martyris* 6 (Van den Gheyn, 296, line 12). Cf. the foundation of two inns at Tella, one a *pandocheion* by bishop Samuel in 513, the other by the *xenodochos* Abraam in the time of bishop Abraam. In our view, the latter dates more plausibly to 556 than 456, because the inscription uses the omicron-epsilon ligature (not common until the late 5th c.). Oppenheim-Lucas, 'Griechische und lateinische Inschriften aus Syrien, Mesopotamien und Kleinasien', nos. 92 and 94. A certain Apios the deacon founded a hostel at Amid in the 5-6th century. *CIG* IV 8653. Gabriel, *Voyages archéologiques* I 134. Cf. the *pandocheion* and other installations some 17 km. southwest of Edessa. Founded in 260, it may have been one of the *mansiones* of the public post road between Edessa and Batman-Serug. *SEG* 36 (1986), no. 1277. Cf. Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 177f., 182f., 297f.

⁴⁸⁷ The folk memory of the Edessans was alive to the violation of Syrian women by the Gothic soldiery, as found in the story of the widow Sophia and her daughter Euphemia. A Gothic soldier bigamously married the latter in 396. Some years later, when the Goth returned on campaign, an unnamed *magister militum* executed the man for violating Roman nuptial law and unlawful enslavement. *Euphemia and the Goth* 5-7, 41-44.

doing their own work in order to serve them.⁴⁸⁸ In a nutshell, they oppressed everyone, nobles and commoners, and no one escaped receiving some (bit) of their wickedness. Even the local rulers, who were appointed to keep order and assign them their billets, put out their hands for bribes. As they took (them) from everyone, they spared no one, but after some days they would send additional (soldiers) to those (people) to whom they had previously sent (troops).⁴⁸⁹ They even billeted them with priests and deacons, although they had an imperial letter⁴⁹⁰ that they should not billet (the soldiers) with them.⁴⁹¹ But why should I struggle to recite many things which, no doubt, are too much even for those greater than I?

After crossing back west over the river Euphrates, the *magistros* went to the emperor, Areobindus (went) to Antioch, Patricius to Melitene, Pharazman to Apameia, Theodore to Damascus, and Calliopius to Mabbug.⁴⁹² [308] Thus Edessa had a little peace, and the

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⁴⁸⁸ This was an abuse of the legitimate expropriation of 'soldier's wood and salt', the so-called *salgammum*, which had been in existence since the time of Diocletian. The practice was banned by three 4th c. laws, but was once again recognised as a legitimate requisition in the 6th c. Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 300 and n. 199. Jones, *LRE*, 1263, n. 51.

⁴⁸⁹ The 'sending out' of soldiers refers to the common method they used to collect their *annonae*. Cf. above, § 86 n. 488. The law is in Greek and certainly went to the praetorian prefect of Oriens. The key passage states: 'If [a soldier] receives [the *annonae*] in kind, let him take what was provided in the *territorium* in accordance with the scrutiny of the God-beloved bishop of the places and the most brilliant defender of the city.' The 'local rulers' were evidently the city councillors (*viz. curiales, decuriones*, βουλευταί) and executive boards (*viz. duumviri*, στρατηγοί), who easily circumvented the objections of the bishops and the negligible influence of the *defensor civitatis* (ἐκδικὸς τῆς πόλεως) in the confused situation of the winter of 504/5. On the functions and weaknesses of the latter institution, see Jones, *LRE*, 479f., 726f., 756f., etc. Ps.-Joshua's criticisms here certainly reflect the attitudes of the ecclesiastical authorities.

⁴⁹⁰ ⲉⲓⲙⲉⲧⲁⲣⲁ, σάκρα.

⁴⁹¹ Clergy are exempted from forced billeting at *Cod. Theod.* 16.2.8. (343 A.D.).

⁴⁹² The provisional truce with Kawad made the retirement of the Roman armies possible. The *numeri* and *limitanei* commanded by the *duces* of Osroene and Mesopotamia undoubtedly remained in their provincial billets. The cities named were the provincial capitals of Syria I, Armenia II, Syria II, Phoenice Libanensis, and Euphratesia respectively, and had been outside the main zone of operations between 502-505. Food production in their *territoria* had not been disrupted by the depopulation and looting of agricultural capital that affected Osroene and Mesopotamia. The burden of provisioning the troops (who certainly accompanied their generals) was thus lifted from the hard-pressed people of the latter two provinces and shifted elsewhere. The different commands must have remained together. Thus, the troops of Oriens will have gone with

small number of people left in it were delighted.⁴⁹³ Governor Eulogius was diligent in rebuilding it, [and the emperor gave] him two hundred pounds for the expenses of reconstruction.⁴⁹⁴ He rebuilt and renewed the [entire] outer wall encircling the city, and also renewed and restored the two aqueducts⁴⁹⁵ coming into (it) from the village of Tell-Zema and from Maudad.⁴⁹⁶ He also rebuilt and completed the *demosion* which had collapsed,⁴⁹⁷ renewed his own *praitorion*, and did a great deal of restoration throughout the entire city. The emperor also gave twenty pounds to the bishop for expenses and the renewal of the wall,⁴⁹⁸ while

Areobindus down the Orontes to Antioch, the 'first' praesental army with Patricius up the Euphrates to Melitene, and the 'second' praesental army with Pharazman (who had already replaced Hypatius) up the Orontes to Apameia. The role played by Damascus and Mabbug is less certain. Mabbug must have accommodated the *numeri* of Euphratesia, and Damascus the local *numeri* of the *limes* of Phoenice along with those of Arabia and Palestine. It would have been risky to send the latter back to their provincial billets, because operations could resume at any time. As it turned out, some of the Lakhmid phylarch's tribal clients did not to recognise the truce and went raiding. On sites, see C. Watzinger and K. Wulzinger, *Damaskus. Die antike Stadt* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1921). J.-P. Rey-Coquais, 'Apamea' and 'Damascus', *PECS*, 66f., 256f.

⁴⁹³ The 'small number of people' was consequence of the famine and migration from the zone of operations between 500-505 A.D.

⁴⁹⁴ *Viz.* two hundred pounds in gold or 14,400 *solidi*. Eulogius was governor (*praeses*) of Osrhoene in 504/5. 'Eulogius 7', *PLRE* II, 419. Capizzi, *L'imperatore Anastasio*, 224f. Ps.-Joshua's use of the locative form 'governor of Edessa' is analogous to his use of city names for the for the governor of Mesopotamia and the different *duces* (*viz.* 'dux of Callinicum' instead of 'dux of Osrhoene'). Cf. above, § 57, 80, etc.

⁴⁹⁵  ἀγῳγός.

⁴⁹⁶ Location unknown.

⁴⁹⁷ Cf. above, § 30.

⁴⁹⁸ In coin 1,440 *solidi*. Ecclesiastical personnel often had the competence to supervise the construction of churches. The skills involved, such as drawing ground plans, laying foundations, stonecutting and carpentry, had secular applications like the repair of fortifications. Examples are found in Trombley, 'War and society in rural Syria', 162-164 and n. 32; 188. Cf. below, § 89. These tasks were finally regularised by an imperial decree of 530. It required bishops, in association with 'men of good repute' and city councillors to inspect all public works and review the public accounts connected with them. Among the tasks to be overseen were the construction of harbours, walls and towers, the repair of bridges and public aqueducts, paving roads, purchasing grain, and heating the bath-houses. *Cod. Iust.* 1.4.26. For commentary, see P. R. Coleman-Norton, *Roman State and Christian Church: a Collection of Legal Documents to A.D. 535*, III (London, 1966), 1058-1063. Ps.-Joshua gives a realistic picture of what could go wrong in a period of administrative chaos fed by famine, war, and easy opportunities for corruption. He reflects the view, later institutionalised by Justinian, that only the bishops could be counted on to serve the interest of ordinary agriculturalists and urban artisans. We owe this suggestion to John Nesbitt.

Urbicius the eunuch (gave him) ten pounds to build a *martyrion* to the blessed Mary.⁴⁹⁹ However, the governor took away the (supply of) oil being given to the *martyria* and monasteries from the oil-store, which came to six thousand and eight hundred *xestai*, and gave orders that it should be used for illumination in the city's colonnades.⁵⁰⁰ The vergers vigorously petitioned him about this, but he could not be persuaded. He did, however, give two hundred *xestai* from his own account to every *martyrion*, lest it be thought that he cared nothing for temples built for God. Up to this year, four *modii* of wheat were being sold for a *denarius*, as were six of barley and two measures of wine, but after the new harvest, six *modii* of wheat were sold for a *denarius*, or ten of barley.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁹ The church was possibly located a short distance northeast of the law courts and basilica. See Map IV. On Urbicius, cf. above, § 84 n. 476.

⁵⁰⁰ This measure was probably the consequence of an oil shortage. The *xestes*, the Greek form of the Latin *sextarius*, had the volume of approximately 0.5 litres. The amount confiscated was thus some 3,400 litres. It is impossible, however, to estimate its market value. Figures are lacking for 6th c. olive oil prices except in Egypt, where they were quite high, about 40-48 *xestai* to the *solidus*; the price was much lower in provinces where olive culture flourished. Jones, *LRE*, 446f. The olive was grown extensively in parts of Syria I and II, where oil presses survive, but little is known about this in Osrhoene. *IGLS*, nos. 376 (Kefr Nabo, Syria I, 224 A.D.), 1509 (Hass, Syria II, 372 A.D.). Cf. P.-L. Gattier, 'Villages du Proche-Orient protobyzantin (4ème-7ème s.). Étude régionale', *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East II: Land Use and Settlement Patterns*, edd. Averil Cameron and G. R. D. King (Princeton, 1994), 20-22. In the papyri, olive oil was known as 'good oil', and was only one of the great variety comestible oils in the Mediterranean diet. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 29-31.

⁵⁰¹ The latter figure is still very high. Cf. Jones, *LRE*, 445-446, who considers 10 *modii* to the *solidus* (= *denarius* [*aureus*] in Syriac) not far above famine rate. It is not known how long it took for grain prices to fall once again in Osrhoene to the pre-famine and pre-war rates of June 495. Cf. above, § 26. There is an indirect indication at Khirbet Hassan near the Late Roman village of Dehes in the Limestone Massif (Syria I), a district hardly affected by the war except for the grain expropriations made in the winter of 504/5. Cf. above, § 87. An inscription mentions the completion of a church in 507/8 and the distribution of large quantities of foodstuffs: 'In the year 556 in the era of Antioch, this church was completed. And there were issued for it 580 *solidi* (ܡܢܐܚܐܬܐ), and 430 *modii* of beans, wheat and lentils [worth] more than 500 [*solidi*].' Pognon, *Inscriptions sémitique de la Syrie, de la Mésopotamie et de la région de Mossoul*, no. 82. It is impossible to calculate the exact price of wheat without knowing the relative proportion of different foodstuffs, but the act of distribution suggests a relative abundance.

88 The Persian Tayyaye did not desist or stop fighting, but crossed over into Roman territory without the Persians, and took two villages into captivity.⁵⁰² When the Persian *marzban* in Nisibis learned of this, he apprehended their chiefs and killed them. The Roman Tayyaye also made an unauthorised crossing into Persian territory, and took a hamlet into captivity. When this was made known to the *magistros*, as he had gone down at the end of this [309] year to Apameia, he sent word to Timostratus, *dux* of Callinicum, (to deal with it). He apprehended five of their chiefs, killing two by the sword and hanging up three on gibbets. Pharazman left Apameia after the *magistros* had gone down there, came to stay in Edessa, and received the appointment from the emperor of army commander in place of Hypatius.⁵⁰³ The wall of the *kastron* of Batnan in Serug, all of which had fallen into ruin, was also rebuilt and restored by the efforts of governor Eulogius of Edessa,⁵⁰⁴

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⁵⁰² This incident should not be connected with the raid conducted by the Lakhmid king al-Mundhir III (505-554) against Palaestina I mentioned in Cyril of Scythopolis' *Life of John the Hesychast* 13-14 in *Kyrillos von Skythopolis*, ed. E. Schwartz (Leipzig, 1939), 211f. and notes. First, ps.-Joshua suggests that the attack of 505 was led by *shaykhs* and not the king. Secondly, Cyril of Scythopolis dates al-Mundhir's raid to the second indiction (1 September 508 to 31 August 509), after the fall of Amid (10-13 January 503), and to the fifty-sixth year of John's life (8 January 509 to 7 January 510). The consensus of these dates puts the al-Mundhir III's raid between the *termini* 8 January 509 and 31 August 509. On this, see I. Shahid's thought-provoking discussion, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century* I 26-28. The raid of 509 was a breach of the seven-year truce agreed in the treaty that ended the Persian War of 502-506. Cf. below, § 98.

⁵⁰³ Martindale regards the name 'Hypatius' as a mistake for 'Areobindus'. *PLRE* II, 144, 578, 873. If so, Pharazman became *magister militum per Orientem*. This is possible for chronological reasons, as Areobindus disappears from ps.-Joshua's narrative after delivering his troops to winter quarters at Antioch in late 504, and he went on to become consul in 505. However, this seems an unnecessary construction, and ps.-Joshua is consistently accurate in assigning titles to the military officers, even where he fails to define their precise working relationship. Celer did not 'replace' Hypatius as commander of one of the praesental armies, but remained *magister officiorum* throughout the war as a kind of supreme commander (cf. above, n. 392). There is great merit in taking ps.-Joshua at face value, making Pharazman *magister militum* of the 'second' praesental army, whose command had remained vacant since the recall of Hypatius around December 503 (possibly because of heavy losses sustained at the battle of Opadna), and with which Pharazman had been cooperating at Amid since 503. Cf. above, §§ 56, 66 and nn. 402, 456.

⁵⁰⁴ Batnan-Serug had surrendered to the Persians at the end of September 503 because its walls were broken down. Cf. above, § 63. Nothing is said about the fate of its civil

while the virtuous priest Aedesius encrusted with brass the doors of the men's aisle⁵⁰⁵ in the (City) Church of Edessa.⁵⁰⁶

The year 817 (= 505/6 A.D.)

The officers of the Roman army told the emperor that much harm was being done to the troops from the fact that they had no city situated on the border.⁵⁰⁷ Thus whenever Roman soldiers went out from Tella or Amid to go through the 'Arab'⁵⁰⁸ on forays, they were afraid of enemy plots everywhere they stayed. If they happened to meet a force larger than they were and decided to turn back, they had to suffer great fatigue, because there was no city close to them in which they could take refuge.⁵⁰⁹ For this reason, the emperor gave the order that a wall should be built at the village of Dara, which lies on the border.⁵¹⁰ Stone-masons were picked out from the whole of Syria and went down there.⁵¹¹ While they were building it, Persians would come out from

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population. Much of it may have escaped across the Euphrates ahead of the Persian advance, although Jacob of Serug had apparently urged people of the cities not to migrate (cf. above, § 54). Cf. Capizzi, *L'imperatore Anastasio*, 224.

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⁵⁰⁶ *Viz.* the Great Church. Cf. above, § 31. Aedesius was a presbyter (ἐπίσκοπος).

⁵⁰⁷ The officers in question were undoubtedly Areobindus, who returned to Constantinople to assume the consulship in late 504, and Celer, who was reporting regularly to the emperor (*viz.* the conditions the Persians were offering for peace). Cf. above, § 81. Cf. ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 7.6 (Hamilton-Brooks, 164f.).

⁵⁰⁸ Cf. § 38.

⁵⁰⁹ The need for a forward base was suggested by Areobindus' forced withdrawal from the 'Ammudin-Dara position in 503. The retreat did not stop until it reached Tella-Constantina, a distance of some 135 km. Above, § 54, 57. See Map II. Cf. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, Figs. XVII and XVIII. Such a base would also enable the army to cover the eastern approaches of the 'Arab against the Lakhmids. Ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 7.6 (Hamilton-Brooks, 164f.).

⁵¹⁰ The generals disagreed as to where the fortress should be sited. Some wanted Dara, but others preferred 'Ammudin. Ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 7.6 (Hamilton-Brooks, 165). For architecture and historical background, see Michael Whitby's study, which replaces the earlier scholarship on the subject: 'Procopius' description of Dara (*Buildings* II.1-3)', *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East*, edd. P. Freeman and D. Kennedy, BAR International Series 297 (II) (Oxford, 1986), 737-783, esp. 751f. An important funerary relief at the entrance to a cave may also date from this time. M. C. Mundell, 'A sixth century funerary relief at Dara in Mesopotamia', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 24 (1975), 209-227.

⁵¹¹ Ps.-Joshua does not mention the dominant role played by Thomas, archbishop of Amid, in the construction of Dara. Among the tasks he performed were: the dispatch of engineers (μηχανικοί) to the site to draw plans of its fortifications, discussion of the

Nisibis and stop [310] them (working). Pharazman therefore left Edessa and went down to stay in Amid, and would go out to the builders and support them.⁵¹² He would also make great hunting (expeditions) for animals, especially wild boar, of which there were many there after the region had been devastated.⁵¹³ He would catch more than forty of them in a single day, and send some of them, alive or dead, to Edessa as a demonstration of his hunting prowess.

91 The virtuous Sergius, bishop of the *kastron* of Birta, which is situated near us by the river Euphrates, also began to build a wall for his city, and the emperor gave him a considerable sum of money towards its costs.⁵¹⁴ The *magistros* also ordered that a wall should be

plan with Anastasius in Constantinople, personal supervision of and visits to the works, and the delegation of specific tasks to two presbyters and three deacons of his see, who supervised the work on a daily basis. The artisans Thomas hired seem to have received high wages to complete the work quickly. Dara was itself an estate of the see of Amid, and Thomas received full reimbursement for the imperial purchase of the place. The *coloni* were made freeholders and received lands of their own from these imperial monies. Ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 7.6 (Hamilton-Brooks, 164f.). Ps.-Joshua may have disliked Thomas because of his having displaced the 'virtuous' Nonnus. Cf. above, § 83, n. 472. Building costs are known mainly from inscriptions on 4th c. funerary monuments in the province of Arabia. Heichelheim, 'Syria', 175f. But see *SEG* 7, no. 1184 (Mothana, Arabia, 485/6 A.D.), where the cost of constructing a 'secure tower', including the hiring of a builder and (apparently) the price of materials, is given as 60 *solidi*. In the *territorium* of Myra, the provincial capital of Lycia (Asia Minor), the cost of rebuilding the rural chapel of St. Daniel was put at 80 1/2 *solidi* (mid-6th c.). Trombley, 'Monastic foundations in sixth-century Anatolia', 58.

⁵¹² Ps.-Zachariah fails to mention Pharazman, naming Felicissimus *dux* of Mesopotamia as the officer present instead. The troops of Oriens and Mesopotamia were certainly in the vicinity covering Dara against any Persian attempt to destroy the new works. Ps.-Joshua might have been tempted to omit the *dux*'s name if the latter had been in the local faction that got Thomas of Amid elected bishop. Above, § 90 n. 511. 'Felicissimus 2', *PLRE* II 458. Ps.-Zachariah mentions the latter's kindness to the agriculturalists and the poor. This suggests that the usual requisitions of unpaid labour and haulage (*ἀγγαρείαι*) were kept to a bare minimum. The section of the *Strategikon* of Maurice, 'How to build a fortress on the frontiers without [provoking] a general war', probably reflects the types of manoeuvres and tactics that were used to screen the building works of Dara from Persian attack. Mauricius, *Strategikon* 10.4, in G. T. Dennis (ed.) and E. Gamillscheg (tr.), *Das Strategikon des Maurikios* (Vienna, 1981), 347-351.

⁵¹³ Wild boar may have been one species in the 'plague of beasts' that afflicted Osroene in 504/5. Cf. above, § 85. Pigs are known to have fed on carrion in more recent wars, e.g. P. Caputo, *A Rumor of War* (New York, 1977), 4.

⁵¹⁴ Bishop Sergius is otherwise unknown. Cf. above, Introduction xiii, n. 4. The fortress was Birta-Makedonopolis in Osroene (present-day Biredjik), lying on the Euphrates c. 45 km. west of Serug. See Map II. Cf. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, 299, Fig. XI,

built for Europus, which lies west of the (same) river in the *eparchia* of Mabbug, and the local people struggled with it as well as they could.⁵¹⁵

After Pharazman went down to Amid, *dux* Romanus came in place of him, and he settled in Edessa with his army and made substantial donations to the poor.⁵¹⁶ During this year, the emperor also added to all his beneficent deeds and wrote off the *synteleia* for the whole of Mesopotamia.⁵¹⁷ All the village landowners were overjoyed and praised the emperor, but the mass of the people were discontent and complained, saying, 'The Goths should not be billeted with us, but with the village landowners, because it is they who have benefited by this rebate.'⁵¹⁸ The *hyparch* ruled that their request should be accepted, but when it began [311] to take effect, all the nobles of the city gathered round *dux* Romanus and persuaded him, saying, 'Let your grace stipulate what each one of the Goths should receive per month, lest they loot the houses of wealthy people when they go into them just as they looted the populace.'⁵¹⁹ He accepted their argument and decreed that

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XVII. Capizzi, *L'imperatore Anastasio*, 224. This notice is especially significant in view of ps.-Joshua's failure to describe the role Thomas of Amid played in the fortification of Dara. Above, § 90. On bishops' supervision of work on fortifications, cf. above, § 87 n. 498.

⁵¹⁵ Europus (present-day Jerablus) lies on the west bank of the Euphrates midway between Zeugma and Mabbug-Hierapolis, the provincial capital of Euphratesia. See Map II. Cf. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, Fig. XXIII. The Greek ἐπαρχία should be taken simply in the sense of 'civil province', not *territorium*. Ps.-Joshua's use of the 'province of Mabbug' to designate Euphratesia is peculiar, but consistent with his usual designation of *duces* and civil governors by their headquarters and capitals.

⁵¹⁶ Romanus had been and, to judge from his rank, still was, *dux* of Palaestina. An experienced commander, he had conducted operations against the Ghassanids and other Arabs as far south as the Red Sea c. 497/8 and 501/2. Cf. above, § 57 n. 325 and below, n. 519. He joined Areobindus' command in Osrhoene in late 503, presumably with the *numeri* of Palaestina, and played an important role in operations thereafter, perhaps as a specialist in fighting the Arabs. Cf. Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5990, 5994, 5997 and 5998 (Mango-Scott, 217, 222, 225, 228). For a different view, see 'Romanus 7', *PLRE* II 948. Romanus comes into ps.-Joshua's narrative late, possibly because there was not much glory in fighting Arab raiding parties.

⁵¹⁷ *Viz.* the entire tax assessment, *annona* and *capitatio*.

⁵¹⁸ The 'mass of the people' (*viz.* urban artisans, shopkeepers and day-labourers) wanted the soldiers kept outside the fortifications and foisted on the villages in the *territorium* of Edessa, many of which included private and church-owned estates, and villages consisting of freeholders.

⁵¹⁹ *I.e.* the *curiales* were anxious to protect their rural estates against illegal requisitions. The archbishop had the same economic interests as the city councillors, but, to judge from ps.-Joshua's reports, usually took sides against them in favour of the rural and

(the soldiers) should get an *espada* of oil a month, as well as two hundred pounds of wood and a bed and bedding to be shared between two.⁵²⁰

- 94 When the Goths heard this order, they rushed off to kill *dux Romanus* in the house of the Barsa family,⁵²¹ but as they were going up the stairs of his lodging, he heard the noise of their uproar and commotion and realised what they were intending to do.⁵²² He quickly put on his armour, and grabbing his weapons and drawing his sword, he stood at the upper door <of the house>⁵²³ in which they were staying. While they did not (actually) kill any of the Goths, they nevertheless brandished their swords and (thus) stopped the first ones who came up from getting in to them.⁵²⁴ Those further down were angrily pushing those above them to move up and get in to them. The stairs of the

urban poor. If the supposition is cogent that Romanus was *dux Palaestinae*, it follows that some of the formations listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* for Palestine (e.g. the five *Illyriciani*), or their successors, continued to draw Goths as recruits. *Or.* XXXIV. 18-22, etc. (Seeck, 72-74). On Gothic officers recruited in Illyricum, see P. Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy 489-554* (Cambridge, 1996), 281f. Cf. the undated inscription of Antioch (Syria I) mentioning a certain Wadila *comes* (viz. commander of a *numerus*) whose name is Gothic. The superior officer mentioned (ἀρχων) was doubtless the *magister militum per Orientem*. *SEG* 7, no. 64, from L. Borchardt, *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 38/9 (1923-4), 153-155.; O. Viedebant, *ibid.*, 155-164. Cf. Cassiodorus' copy of the letter of Theodoric to Adila *comes* (507-511 A.D.) at *Variae* 2.29.

⁵²⁰ An *espada* is a 'wine-can'; cf. Glossary, s.v. For the *salgumum*, 'soldier's wood and salt', see above, § 86 n. 488. The large quantities of wood were required for heating the the troops' houses during the winter of 505/6. Firewood was a scarce commodity throughout Osrhoene and Mesopotamia. For example, Thannourios (present-day Tell Touneynir) near the Khabur river had a thick, leafy forest, but was quite far off. Procopius, *De Aedificiis* 2.6.15 (Dewing VII 140f.). See Map II. Cf. Dilleman, *Haute Mésopotamie*, 75-78. Fig. X. Cf. Heichelheim, 'Syria', 135, 205.

⁵²¹ The Barsa family were certainly *curiales*. Little is known of Edessan families except what is recorded in a group of 2nd-3rd c. mosaic inscriptions. H. J. W. Drijvers (ed.), *Old Syriac (Edessan) Inscriptions* (Leiden, 1972), nos. 45-47 (2nd-3rd c.), and 48, 56, 57 (3rd c.), and 51 (277/8 A.D.); Segal, *Edessa*, Plates 1-3, 12a-b, 16b, 17a. Romanus was quartered as the 'guest' (*hospes*) in the townhouse of this wealthy family. For the legal and practical side of *hospitium*, see Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 297-304; Jones, *LRE*, 249f., 631f. and 1115, n. 26.

⁵²² Multi-storey houses are also known in the Limestone Massif (Syria I and II). Cf. Tate, *Campagnes de la Syrie du Nord*, 15-41, 85-171. Cf. Heichelheim, 'Syria', 163f.

⁵²³ Conjecture of Wright (ܡܨܬܐ ܕܡܨܬܐ). MS.: ܡܨܬܐ.

⁵²⁴ The first hand of the MS. The sentence has been emended to a singular subject throughout (i.e. Romanus) in an old correction, possibly from the first hand. The plural presumably denotes 'Romanus and his entourage'.

house were thus occupied by a great crowd, as your Holiness⁵²⁵ will appreciate. With the first ones who had gone up being unable to get in for fear of the sword, and those in the rear pushing against them, hordes of people were on the stairs, with the result that they broke under the weight and gave way on them.⁵²⁶ A few of them died, while many suffered broken [312] limbs and were incurably maimed. With the opportunity afforded him by this accident, Romanus fled along the roof-tops from one house to another, and thus made his escape.⁵²⁷ However, he said no more to them (about their rations), and they therefore stayed where they were billeted, acting according to their own desires. No one could control, restrain, or instruct them.⁵²⁸

All this year, our bishop Mar Peter was very grievously ill. During April, the pressure was again particularly severe on our city, for the *magistros* assembled the whole army and set off to go down to Persian territory, in order to establish and renew a peace treaty with them.⁵²⁹ When he came into Edessa, Persian envoys came to him and told him that the *astabid* who had come to meet him to conclude the treaty with him had died.⁵³⁰ They urged him that if he had come down for the sake of peace, he should not proceed beyond Edessa until another *astabid* was sent by the Persian king.⁵³¹ He accepted their request and stayed five months in Edessa. Because the city (itself) could not accommodate the Goths who were with him, they were also lodged in the villages and

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⁵²⁵ I.e. the addressee Sergius.

⁵²⁶ Late Roman sources are agreed that Gothic soldiers were often clumsy and stupid fighters.

⁵²⁷ It was possible to leap from roof to roof in the inner parts of Near Eastern cities. A somewhat similar escapade is reported a century earlier (*post* 406) at Gaza. Mark the Deacon, *Vie de Porphyre, évêque de Gaza*, ed./tr. H. Grégoire and M.-A. Kugener (Paris, 1930), § 96.

⁵²⁸ A negative reflection on the quasi-democratic nature of the Late Roman army.

⁵²⁹ The 'whole army' consisted of elements of the two praesental armies, that of Oriens, and the different provincial contingents that had gone into winter quarters in 504/5. They converged on Edessa from the west, north and south, taking the roads leading across the Euphrates from Antioch, Melitene, Apameia, Damascus and Mabbug. It numbered in the tens of thousands. Cf. above, § 87.

⁵³⁰ This proves that the Persian was no ordinary *spahbad*, but the *Eran-spahbad*, the Sasanid general-in-chief. Cf. above, § 80 n. 456.

⁵³¹ I.e. the Persians would take it as a termination of the truce if the Roman army moved further eastward. Its billets presumably lay no further west than Tektek Dag, the western limit of the Edessa's *territorium*. See Map II. Cf. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, Fig. XVII.

all the monasteries around the city, large and small. Similarly, not even the solitaries⁵³² were permitted to dwell in the silence they love, because (the Goths) were even billeted upon them in their dwellings.⁵³³

96 So excessive were (the Goths) in their eating and drinking, since of course their consumption from the first day of their arrival was not at their own expense, that some of them, enjoying themselves in the upper storeys of houses, went out [313] at night, befuddled with too much wine, and striding out into empty space, fell into the abyss and brought their life to an unfortunate end. Others dozed off while sitting and drinking, fell from upper storeys, and died on the spot. Yet others suffered in their beds from excessive eating. Some would put boiling water into the ears of those serving them for the slightest mistake. Others who had gone into a garden to take the produce handed out death by an arrow to the gardener when he rose to prevent them stealing; his blood was not avenged. Yet others, overcome by their own rage, killed one another as their evil grew and no one restrained it; for those on whom they were billeted acted with great understanding with them and did everything according to their wishes, because they did not (want to) give them any excuse to harm them.⁵³⁴ You will not be unaware that there were also others among them who lived in an orderly fashion, for in a large army like that there are certain to be some such people. So devastating, however, was the evil of the bad ones, that the headstrong among the Edessenes ventured to do something which was unwarranted. They put down a complaint against the *magistros* on paper sheets⁵³⁵ and secretly posted them up at certain

⁵³² Literally: 'those who dwell in solitude'.

⁵³³ Viz. small huts and dwellings of every kind, including caves.

⁵³⁴ Here, as elsewhere, ps.-Joshua is our single most detailed source on civilians being bullied by the soldiery. Cf. above, § 86, 92-95. The only 'good' Goth was the *tribounos* Ald, who fought heroically in one of the attempts in 504 to retake Amid, and was perhaps one of ps.-Joshua's informants. Above, § 71. The complaint about the 'Goths' reflects ps.-Joshua's prejudice against the soldiery in general. It is here a denunciatory term for all the nationalities in the prefectures of Illyricum and Thrace who were being recruited into the *comitatenses*. Cf. Theophanes' 'Goths, Bessi and other Thracian races'. *Chron.* AM 5997 (Mango-Scott, 225). The evidence for recruitment there is mostly Justinianic; the reign of Anastasius is illustrated by papyri that concern Goths serving in Aegyptus. Jones, *LRE*, 668-670. Cf. Michael Whitby, 'Recruitment in Roman armies from Justinian to Heraclius (ca. 565-615)', in Cameron, *States, Resources*, 61-124, esp. 68-75.

⁵³⁵ *καταγὰς*, *χάρτης*.

places in the city. When he heard about it, he was not angry, as he could have been. Because of his kindness, he neither sought out who had done this, nor considered doing anything harmful to the city. Instead, he made a big effort to get out of Edessa quickly and speedily.⁵³⁶

*The year 818 (= 506/7 A.D.)*⁵³⁷

[314] The *magistros* then took his whole army and went down to the border. At the city of Dara, a Persian envoy came to him with hostages who had been sent by the *astabid*.⁵³⁸ They persuaded him that if he wanted to make peace, he also should send hostages to match those he had received.⁵³⁹ Afterwards, both sides would come together in friendship, meet face to face with five hundred unarmed cavalry each, and then sit down to negotiations⁵⁴⁰ and do what was needed. He accepted their argument, sent hostages, and went unarmed to meet the *astabid* on the day that had been agreed. However, because he feared that some plot might be hatched against him by the Persians, he positioned the whole Roman army opposite them, with their arms, and gave them a signal, ordering that if they saw the signal, they should come to him quickly. When the *astabid* arrived to meet him and the Roman soldiers and all the officers with them had sat down to negotiations, one of the Roman soldiers looked carefully and saw that all those who had come with the *astabid* were wearing armour underneath. He revealed this to Pharazman the commander and

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⁵³⁶ Celer was fearful of riots and possibly an urban 'guerilla war' against the soldiery. Residents of provincial cities had fewer opportunities to register public opinion than in *metropoleis* like Antioch, Alexandria and, of course, Constantinople.

⁵³⁷ In margin: 'During this year the holy Mar Shila died in the village of [...].'

⁵³⁸ Cf. above, § 95 n. 456.

⁵³⁹ The *magister officiorum* usually negotiated treaties with Persia, as Helion did in 422 and Peter the Patrician in 562. This was because the public post and staff of interpreters was directly under the *magister*'s control. Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy*, 155-158. The treaty of 506 was drafted by Armonius the *a secretis* ('secretary of the imperial consistory'). Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicle* 34, 112. 'Armonius', *PLRE* II 150. Cf. Jones, *LRE*, 574, 605. Menander Protector describes the protocol of drawing up and confirming documents in exceptional detail. Frag. 11, *HGM* II 10-32. R. C. Blockley (ed./tr.), *The History of Menander the Guardsman* (Liverpool, 1985), Frag. 6.1-2, pp. 54-91. Bury, *LRE* II 120-123. Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 260-264. Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy*, 151-158, 160.

⁵⁴⁰ Cf. § 80, note on *rustica*.

Timostratus the *dux*,⁵⁴¹ and they gave the signal to the troops. Immediately they gave a shout and came to them, taking prisoner the *astabid* and those with him in (their) midst. When the troops in the Persian camp learnt that the *astabid* and those with him had been seized, they fled out of fear and went into Nisibis. The soldiers wanted to keep hold of the *astabid* and kill those who were with him, [315] but the *magistros* persuaded them not to create a reason for fighting nor to <sabotage>⁵⁴² the peace. (Only) with difficulty were they won over, but they did listen to him and release the *astabid* and his companions from their custody without harming them - for even in victory, Roman officers are peacable. When the *astabid* went back to his camp and realised that the Persians had gone to Nisibis, he was afraid to stay out by himself and went in with them. He tried to force them to go out of the city with him, but they were unwilling to go out of fear. So as not to let their fear become obvious to the Romans, the *astabid* sent word for his daughter to be brought to Nisibis, and in accordance with Persian custom took her as a wife. When the *magistros* sent him word with an oath, 'No one will harm you, even if you come out alone', he responded, 'Not out of fear am I not coming out, but in order that the period of the wedding feast should be completed.' Although the *magistros* was well aware of the whole business, he turned a blind eye to it as if he did not know.

- 98 Some days later, when the *astabid* (eventually) came out to him, because of the desire for peace he set aside all the conditions which he had decided to demand of the Persians. He drew up an agreement with them and made peace. They composed the written terms between them and established a definite time among them when they would not instigate hostilities against each other.⁵⁴³ All the troops were glad and rejoiced at the peace which had been made. While they were still on the border, Celer the *magistros* and Calliopius received letters from the emperor Anastasius which [316] were filled with concern and compassion for the whole region of Mesopotamia. He wrote to them to the effect that if they thought it appropriate that the *synteleia* should be
- 99

⁵⁴¹ Cf. above, § 57.

⁵⁴² Read with Wright مسمم (MS.: مسمم).

⁵⁴³ Ps.-Joshua does not repeat the financial terms of the treaty, which were well known. The Romans agreed to pay 500 pounds in gold *per annum* (36,000 *solidi*) in return for a truce of seven years. Procopius, *Wars* 1.9.24 (Dewing I 76f.). John Lydus, *De Magistratibus* 3.53.

written off, they had the authority to remit it without delay. They considered that the entire *synteleia* should be written off for the territory of the Amidenes, and half of it for the territory of the Edessenes.⁵⁴⁴ They sent word for this to be made known in Edessa, and shortly afterwards they also sent other letters announcing the peace that had been made.

On the twenty-eighth of November, they brought the whole army up from the border, but when the *magistros* arrived at Edessa, he thought that he would not enter it because of the (Edessenes') complaint against him.⁵⁴⁵ The blessed Bar-Hadad, bishop of Tella, persuaded him not to be swayed by anger (at that incident), nor to leave behind him any ill-feeling or resentment. He readily accepted his argument, and indeed all the Edessenes, from the greatest to the least, came out to receive him with great joy, carrying wax candles. All the clergy, the children of the covenant,⁵⁴⁶ and the monks also came out with them and he entered the city with great gladness. He sent on the whole army the same day to continue on its way, but he himself stayed three days and gave the governor two hundred *denarii* for distribution as presents.⁵⁴⁷ Rejoicing in the peace that had been made, happy at the coming release from the distress in which they were presently living, exulting in the hope of blessings expected in the future, and praising God, who in his grace and

⁵⁴⁴ Ps.-Joshua reports tax remissions (*viz.* waiver of the *synteleia*) for 'all' or the 'whole region of Mesopotamia' for three indictions, 503/4, 504/5 and 505/6. Each was a separate act, made on the basis of the agricultural production of the province. In the present instance and all others, 'the whole region of Mesopotamia' includes the provinces in the zone of operations, *viz.* Osrhoene and Mesopotamia, which are here described as the 'territories' of Edessa and Amid. Cf. above, § 66, 78, 92. Osrhoene had recovered sufficiently well since 506 to qualify for the remission of only half its tax. Amid is said to have received a seven-year exemption from all annual taxes (*viz.* *annona* and *capitatio*) at ps.-Zachariah, *HE* 7.5 (Hamilton-Brooks, 163) and Procopius, *Wars* 1.7.35. Ps.-Joshua uses the phrase 'territory of Amid' to designate the Roman province of Mesopotamia, and this suggests that the tax assessment of the province was often spoken of as though it were that of the provincial capital. If, as seems likely, Procopius has done the same thing, it is probable that Anastasius granted the province of Mesopotamia three more tax remissions, each a separate act, in 507/8, 508/9 and 510/11, rather than a single long-term waiver for seven years by a single act, as ps.-Zachariah and Procopius have it.

⁵⁴⁵ Cf. above, § 96.

⁵⁴⁶ Cf. above, § 36.

⁵⁴⁷ I.e. 200 gold *solidi*.

mercy had brought peace⁵⁴⁸ to both empires, the citizens sent him on his way with songs fitting for him and for (the emperor) who had sent him.⁵⁴⁹

101 Even if this emperor seemed (to act) differently at the end of his life, let no one make difficulty over his praises, [317] but let him remember what was done by Solomon in the closing period of his life.⁵⁵⁰

These few things out of many I have written for Your Grace to the best of my ability, both unwillingly and willingly. I have been unwilling because I might weary the wise sage who is more expert in these matters than I, but I have been willing for the sake of obeying your command. So now I may urge you to fulfil the promise in your letter to intercede constantly with God for my sinful self. I shall therefore take care, since I know your wish, and write down and send to Your Eminence whatever happens in the future and is worthy of memorial, if I remain alive. Let us pray - we who are here, Your Eminence there, and all men everywhere - that the content of the narrative will be about a great change which will have happened in the world. Just as we were unable to narrate the (events) of the evil times (past) as they (truly) were, because of the magnitude of their troubles, so also may we be unable to narrate those of the future, because of the magnitude of their blessings. May our speech be inadequate to tell of the good conduct of our citizens, of the peace and prosperity that shall reign in the world, of the great abundance that shall come to pass, and of the overflowing increase of the harvest of the blessing of God, who

⁵⁴⁸ MS.: 'his peace'.

⁵⁴⁹ The description given by ps.-Joshua has much in common with imperial *adventus* ceremonial, but has missed the attention of commentators. On imperial *adventus*, see S. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremonial in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1981), 17-89, Plates 8-25. On Anastasius' accession, see *ibid.* 68-70. The distribution of largesse was an important feature of *adventus*. *Ibid.* 37, Plates 14-15.

⁵⁵⁰ We share the widely held opinion that this sentence is an insertion. Cf. the Introduction, pp. xxviii-xxix.

said, 'The former troubles will be forgotten and be hidden from my sight.'⁵⁵¹

To him be glory for ever and ever, Amen.

⁵⁵¹ Isaiah 65 : 16. On the rhetorical flourish with which ps.-Joshua concludes this epilogue - following his remark that 'the citizens sent (the *magistros*) on his way with songs fitting for him and for (the emperor) who had sent him' - cf. the advice of Menander Rhetor for the epilogue of an imperial oration: 'You will speak of the prosperity and good fortune of the cities: the markets are full of goods, the cities of feasts and festivals, the earth is tilled in peace, the sea sailed without danger, piety towards God is increased, honours are given to all in due fashion' (Menander Rhetor 377.10-15, [ed. and] translated by D. A. Russell and N. G. Wilson, *Menander Rhetor* [Oxford, 1981], p. 93). On the epilogue, cf. also the Introduction, pp. xx-xxi.

APPENDIX

The Fortifications of Amid

Amid (in Greek, Amida) was the provincial capital of Mesopotamia. The present-day site, Diyarbakır, was for a long time known by its Turkish name Kara Amid ('Amid the Black') because of the basaltic stone used in the construction of its walls and public buildings. Its fortifications conform to the shape of the escarpment on which it stands above the Tigris. The site measures c. 1.5 km. by 0.95 km. between the gates at its cardinal points. The walls are of two periods: the older, Late Roman sections, mainly on the eastern and southern sides of the site, have distinctive square towers. They probably date from the rebuilding of the city c. 367-375, after its fall to Shapur II in 359. *CIL* III 6730. The round towers belong to the Islamic period. The earliest of the latter are dated by inscriptions to 909-910 A.D. M. van Berchem and J. Strzygowski, *Amida* (Heidelberg, 1910), 6-8, 13-122, 277-285 (inscr. nos. 1-7); and see in general the more recent study of A. Gabriel, *Voyages archéologiques* (cf. § 50, n. 254). Late Roman towers are visible in Figs. 219 and 227. The existing gates lie at the 'cardinal points' (viz. east-west and north-south), whence the relative positions of the Late Roman *cardo* and *decumanus* can be inferred. *Ibid.*, 27. On the North Gate, see § 53, n. 298. See also C. Preusser, *Nordmesopotamische Baudenkmäler altchristlicher und islamischer Zeit* (Leipzig, 1911), Plate 67, and, more recently, D. van Berchem, 'Recherches sur la chronologie des enceintes de Syrie et de Mésopotamie', *Syria* 31 (1954), 262-267 and Fig. 2, with map scaled in metres. Cf. D. Sellwood, 'Amida', *EI* I 938f.

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GLOSSARY OF SELECTED TERMS

The following Glossary is mainly devoted to military matters and personnel (Roman and Persian), Roman administration, local administration and society, and money, weights, and measures. It also includes notable terms relating to public buildings, religion, and literary genres. The bare numbers refer to sections (following the section numeration of Wright); those prefixed by 'introd.' to pages of the introduction, those prefixed by n(n). to note(s) to the translation, and those prefixed by 'introd. n.' to notes to the introduction.

Abbot [ܐܒܬܐ] 1.

Amphitheatre [ܐܡܦܝܬܝܬܝܪܐ, κυνέγιον] 76.

'Arab [ܐܪܒ] 38, 50, 90; introd. xli; nn. 180, 181, 257, 269, 330, 486, 509, Map II.

Astabid [ܐܨܬܒܝܕ, Pers. *spahbad*, 'master of the soldiery'] 59, 80(multiple), 81(x2), 95(x2), 97(multiple), 98; nn. 297, 324, 361, 456, 486, 530.

Ballistae [ܒܐܠܝܨܬܐ, βαλλιστής, *ballista* ('catapult')] 75; introd. xlviii, nn. 295, 360, 436.

Basilikai [ܒܐܣܝܠܝܬܐ, βασιλική ('portico')] 30, 43.

Bath [ܒܬܐ, βαλανεῖον] 19, 43, 75. - Bathhouse [ܒܬܐ ܕܚܝܬ] 30; introd. xlv, xlviii, nn. 77, 135, 498, Map IV. - Cf. *Demosion* and *Tepid* bathing-room.

Boukellaton [ܒܘܟܝܠܬܐܢ, βουκελλάτον, *bucellatum*, 'soldiers' bread'] 54, 70(x2), 77; nn. 312, 313, 314, 423.

- Candles [כִּנֹּדִים, κανδήλαι] 27(x2), 30. - [כִּנֹּדִים, κηρίωνες] 31, 100, nn. 120, 121.
- Chora* [כְּוֶרָה, χώρα, *territorium*, rural areas under the administration of a city] 43, 46, 68, 77, 85; introd. xv.
- Chorepiskopos* [כֹּהֵנִיכָא, χωρεπίσκοπος] 83; nn. 194, 208, 300, 471, 479.
- Clergy [כֹּהֲנִים, (ש)כֹּהֲנִים, κληρος, κληρικοί] 36, 83(x2), 100; nn. 173, 491; introd. xli, xix(x2).
- Colonnades [כִּנְדָּפִים, στοά] 27, 29, 31, 32, 40, 41(x2), 42, 87; nn. 131, 152.
- Comes* [כֹּמֵס, κόμης, *comes*] 58(x3), 61(x2), 80, 81; nn. 164, 244, 269, 326, 333, 346, 367, 379, 422, 425, 465, 519; introd. xxxiv, xlv(x2); introd. n. 89.
- Commander (army, Roman unless noted otherwise) [סֵרָאס, 48(Persian), 58, 65, 73, 80, 88. - [סֵרָאס, 97. - [סֵרָאס, 54; nn. 275, 292, 307, 324(Persian), 346, 392, 425, 453, 503, 516, 519; introd. xxxviii, xlv(x2), 1.
- Commoners [כֹּמֵסִים, probably to be taken in two senses: *humiliores*, 'citizens below the status of *honestiores*' (the latter of whom included soldiers, city councillors, and members of the imperial aristocracy), and δῆμος, the urban populace] 28, 86.
- Covenant (community/children of) [בְּרִית (חַסֵּד)] 36, 100; n. 173.
- Dancer [כֹּרֵא, ὀρχηστής] 27, 30, 46(x2).
- Demosion* [דְּמוֹסִיּוֹן, δημόσιον ('public building')] 29, 30(x2), 43, 75, 87. - Cf. Bath.
- Denarius* [דֵּנָרִי, (money unit)] 26, 28, 38, 39, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 63, 84, 87, 100; nn. 38, 115, 185, 195, 196, 208, 501.
- Dinars* (money unit) nn. 38, 81.
- Drachma* [דְּרַחְמָא, (money unit)] 10, 11, 84; n. 477.
- Dux* [דֹּוּקְס, δούξ, *dux*] 51(x2), 57, 64(x2), 69, 75, 80(x2), 88, 92, 93, 94, 97; introd. xxxviii, xlii, xlv-xlv; introd. n. 129; nn. 52, 58, 244, 257, 260, 266, 267, 268, 269, 309, 310, 325, 346,

379, 391, 395, 404, 425, 427, 433, 436, 438, 457, 461, 492, 494, 512, 515, 516, 519.

Eparchia [ܐܦܚܝܬܐ, ἐπαρχία, *provincia*] 91; n. 515.

Espada (of oil) [ܐܦܬܐܢܐ, 'wine-can'] 93.

Eunuch (imperial) [(ܐܠܚܝܬܐ) ܐܠܚܝܬܐ] 84, 87.

Folles [ܦܠܠܝܬܐ, φόλλις, *follis* (coinage)] 39; nn. 193, 194, 195, 199, 205, 206, 208, 476, 477.

Free-born [ܐܦܬܐܢܐ (ܦܬܐ)] 22(Persians), 43(Edessenes).

Governor (of Edessa, i.e. Osrhoene, unless noted otherwise) [ܐܠܚܝܬܐ, ἡγεμὼν, *praeses*] 29, 32, 42, 43(x2), 87(x2), 89, 100. - [ܐܠܬܐ] 39(x2), 40, 43, 80 (of Amid, i.e. Mesopotamia), 83 (of Amid, i.e. Mesopotamia). - [ܐܠܬܐܢܐ] 48 (of Theodosiopolis, i.e., *comes Armeniae*); introd xxv (of Mosul), xxxviii, xliii, xlv.

Greek characters [ܐܠܬܐܢܐ ܐܠܬܐܢܐ] 68.

Greek myths [ܐܠܬܐܢܐ ܐܠܬܐܢܐ] 46; introd xvii. - Cf. Pagan.

Hostage [ܐܠܬܐܢܐ, ὄμηρος] 10, 61, 80, 97(x3). - [ܐܠܬܐܢܐ/ܐܠܬܐܢܐ] 10, 23; nn. 215.

Hyparch [ܐܦܚܝܬܐ, ὑπαρχος, *praefectus*; in ps.-Joshua used to designate the praetorian prefect of Oriens] 9, 54, 70, 77, 93; n. 311.

Kab [ܐܠܬܐ, 'a corn measure'] 39(x3), 41, 43; n. 144, 192.

Kastron [ܐܠܬܐܢܐ, κάστρον, *castrum*, 'fortified town', 'fortress',] 74, (89), (91).

Landowners of villages [ܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ, probably agricultural freeholders, δεσπόται] 39, 92, 93.

Magistros [ܡܥܝܨܬܪܐ, μάγιστρος, *praefectus (militum)*; in ps.-Joshua used to designate Celer, *magister officiorum*] (59), 64, 65, 67, 69, 73, 75, 79, 80, 81, 87, 88, 91, 95, 96, 97, 99, 100; nn. 392, 551; introd. xxviii.

Market-space [ܡܪܬܝܪܐ, ἀντίφορος] 27; n. 123.

Martyrion [ܡܪܬܝܪܐ ܕܥܡܐ, μαρτύριον] 29, 31, 35(x3), 60, 87(x3); introd. xl, nn. 146, 147, 167, 215, 296, 343, 357, 360, 373, 499.

Marzban [ܡܪܙܒܐܢ, Persian 'warden of the marches' (military title)] 21, 51, 56, 59, 64, 66, 75, 77, 88; nn. 92, 297, 316, 324, 393, 406, 466.

Measure (of wine) [ܡܥܠܐ, μέτρον] 41, 45, 87.

Memorial [ܡܡܪܝܐܠܐ (historiography)] 1(x2), 3, 4, 86, 101. - Commemorate [ܡܡܪܝܐܠܐ] 4.

Memra [ܡܡܪܐ, Syriac verse homily] 54; n. 303

Modius [ܡܡܕܝܐ (corn measure)] 26, 38, 39, 44, 45, 46, 54, 70, 77, 87; introd. li, nn. 113, 114, 185, 198, 501

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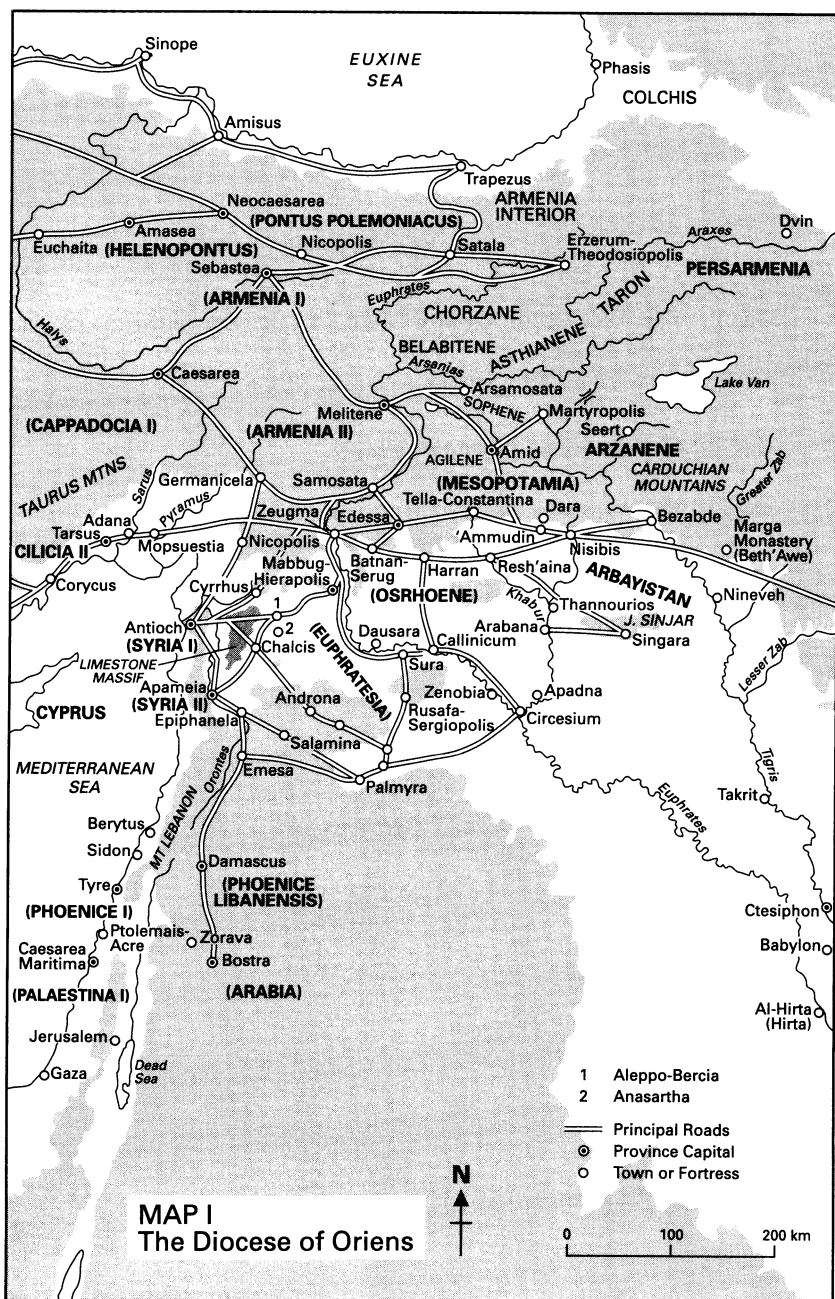
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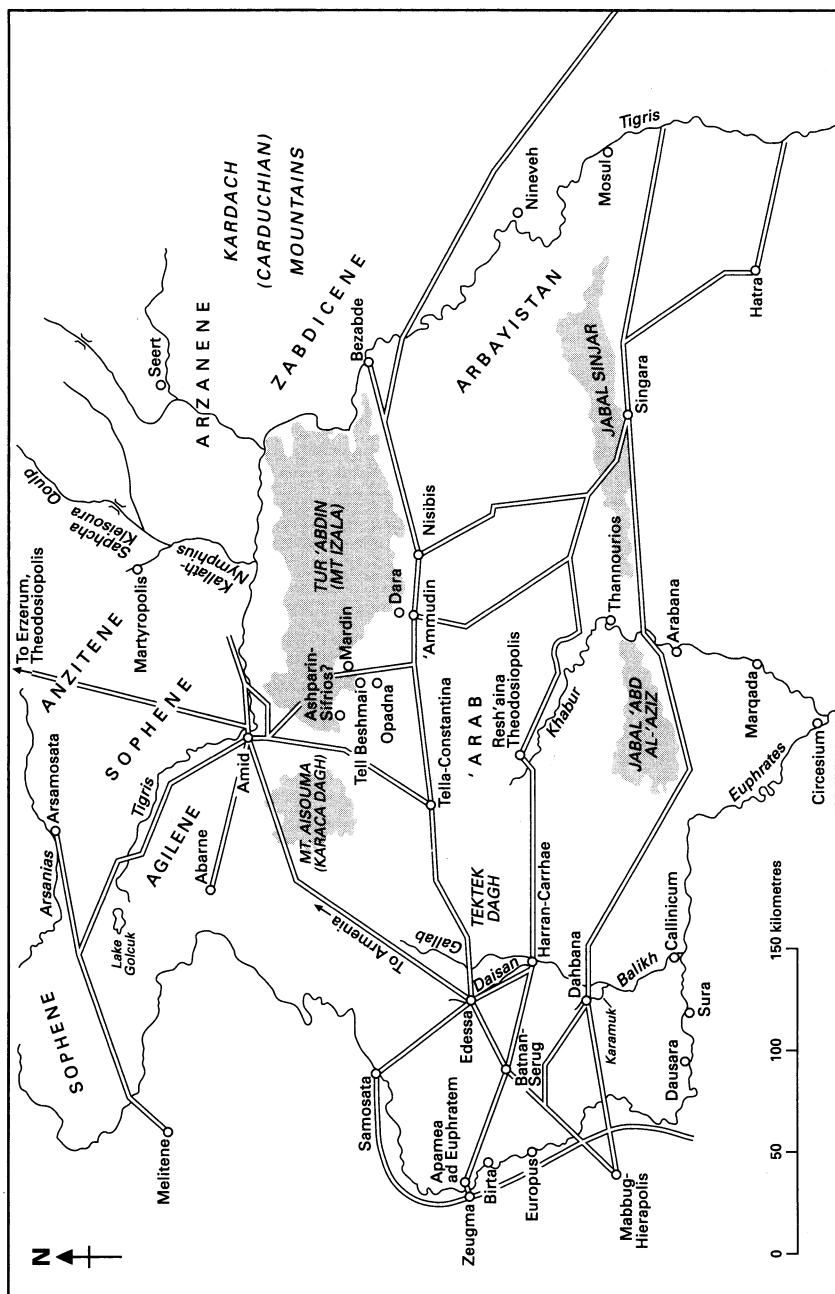
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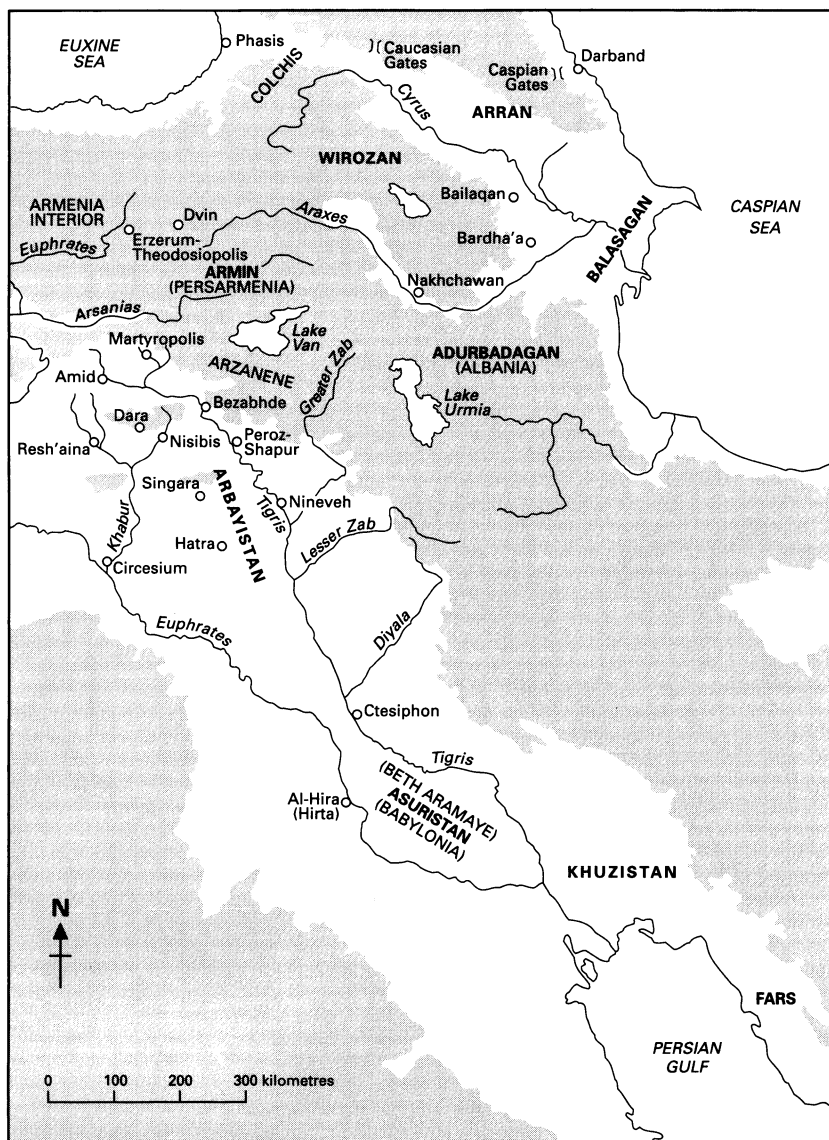
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- Map II **Osrhoene and Mesopotamia**
- Map III **The Western Sasanid Domains** (source: map on p. 748 of Yarshater, E. [ed.], *The Cambridge History of Iran III/2* [Cambridge, 1983]).
- Map IV **Edessa and Territorium** (based on Plan I in J. B. Segal, *Edessa, 'The Blessed City'* [Oxford, 1970], reproduced by kind permission of Oxford University Press)
- Map V **Amid** (sources: figures 68 and 69 in Albert Gabriel, *Voyages archéologiques dans la Turquie orientale*, vol. I [Paris, 1940]; and Fig. 1 in M. van Berchem and J. Strzygowski, *Amida* [Heidelberg, 1910])





MAP II
Osroene and Mesopotamia



MAP III
The Western Sasanid Domains

MAP IV Edessa and Territorium

